ISL 343: Introduction to Islamic Theology

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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COURSE CODE / TITLE **ISL 343: Introduction to Islamic Theology**

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COURSE GUIDE

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Table of Contents **Page**

Introduction. ……1
CourseAims ……..……...1
Course Objectives..……...…… 2
Working through this Course ……..…….....2
Course Materials …….. 2
Study Units …… 3
References ……. 4
Assessment …… 4
Tutor - Marked Assignments ……. 4
Final Examination and Grading ……. 4
Course Marking Scheme …… 5
Course Overview/Presentation Schedule……5-6
How to Get the Most from this Course ……..6-8
Tutor and Tutorials ……. 8
Conclusion 8
Summary ……..8

INTRODUCTION

ISL343: Introduction to Islamic Theology is a two - unit course available in the Department of Religious Studies of NOUN programme. The course gives you a clear picture of what the science of Islamic Theology (*'ilmut-Tawḥīd)* is all about. It gives you insight into the development of sectarian movements and their doctrines, and the roles played by prominent theologians in the development of the Muslim creed. You will also be introduced into fundamental doctrines of Islam as derived from Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* which are the two primary sources of Islamic system of belief. The course also gives you insight into some Muslim catechism in use in different Islamic territories.

What You Will Learn in this Course

The general aim of this course is to introduce you to *'ilmut-Tawḥīd*. It points out the theological traces in the Qur'ān, the sacred Book of Islam which formed the nucleus of the science. Then, it provides the internal and external factors which helped in building up the structure of the science. This is followed by further clarification of the concept and traces of theological debates among early Muslim groups. Rationalism in Islamic belief system and consequential emergence of orthodoxy are thereafter presented respectively. Biographies of prominent Muslim theologians of the *Jabriyyah*, *Qadariyyah*, Rationalim, Shi'ism and Sunnism inclinations are also included. You shall also be familiarized with issues dealing with divine Unity and Justice, created-ness and eternity of the Qur'ān, possibility of vision of the Divine Being and various views on anthropomorphic words or expressions found in the Muslim scriptures. Issues of eschatological nature or belief in the unseen or what happens in life after death are also part of what you will learn in this Course.

Course Aims

There are fourteen Units in the course and each unit has its objectives. You should read the objectives of each Unit and bear them in mind as you go through the Unit. In addition to the objectives of each Unit, the overall aims of this course include:

(i) To introduce you to the origin and development of the Science of Islamic theology called *'lmut-Tawḥīd* or *'lmul-Kalām* in the Arabic tongue.
(ii) To familiarize you with the fundamental theological principles in Islam with references to their bases from the Islamic sacred sources and views of various schools of thought.
(iii) The course will also acquaint you with prominent Muslim theologians and the roles played by them in giving shape and disseminating the science.

Course Objectives

Based on the general aims of this course, some objectives of the course as a whole are set out. These are the things you should be able to do by the time you complete the course. If you are able to meet the objectives, you would have achieved the aims of the course. Therefore on your successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

a) Explain the religious, social, and political factors responsible for the emergence of Islamic theology.
b) Highlight the role internal and external factors played in the development of Islamic theology.
c) Discuss the emergence of Mu'tazilism (the thorough going rationalists) and other sectarian tendencies in Islam and the doctrines distinguishing them from other Muslim theological schools.
d) Discuss the emergence of Sunnism (i.e. Islamic orthodoxy), and give account of the contribution of its prominent scholars.
e) Highlight and discuss the contributions of prominent Muslim theologians to the science of Islamic theology.

Working Through This Course

You have to work through the study units in the course. There are fourteen units in all.

Course Materials
Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments File
5. Presentation Schedule

Study Units

There are sixteen units (of four modules) in this course. They are listed below:

MODULE 1: **Origin, *Tawḥīd, Īmān, Nubuwwah* and *Risālah***

Unit 1: Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology

Unit 2: Significance of Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) as an Article of Faith

Unit 3: The Concept of *Īmān*

Unit 4: An-*Nubuwwah* and *ar-Risālah*

MODULE 2: Development of Muslim *Firaq*

Unit 1: The Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and the Muslim Majority's Opinion on Predestination

Unit 2: The Kharijites (*Khawārij)*

Unit 3: The *Shī'ah*

Unit 4: Extremist Shī'ites (*Ghulātu sh-Shī'ah*)

MODULE 3 *AL – MU'TA ZILAH* AND *AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*
(the Mutazilites and the Ash'arites)

Unit 1: The Emergence of the *Mu'tazilah* and Their Fundamental Doctrines

Unit 2: The Prominent Mu'tazilites and More of their Views.

Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines

Unit 4: Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed

MODULE 4: *Al-Ghaybiyyāt* – Belief in the Unseen.

Unit 1: Angels, Spirit and Jinns 86-93

Unit 2: Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and Enjoyment In the Grave 94-100

Unit 3: Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror 101-109

Unit 4: Eschatological Issues III: Sin, Record of Deeds and Recompense 110 -118

References and Other Resources

Every unit contains a list of references and further reading which are meant to deepen your knowledge of the course. We hereby provide a list containing some of them. Try to get as many as possible of those textbooks and materials.

(1) T. P. Hughes (1895). *Dictionary of Islam*, London, Allen & Co.

(2) A. J. Wensick (1932). *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, Cambridge University Press.

(3) W. M. Watt (1962). *Islamic Survey, Series 1, Islamic Philosophy and Theology*. Edimburgh, University Press.

(4) Muhammad Ali (n.d.). *The Religion of Islam*, Lahore, Pakistan

(5) Ahmad A. Ghalwash (1963) *The Religion of Islam*, Cairo, Egypt

(6) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in Muslim Philosophy*, Lahore, Pakistan.

(7) Muhammad al-Fudali's Creed, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalām*. http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal

(8) 'Alī bn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *The Short Creed;* http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal.

(9) Abdalatī, H. (1975) *Islam In Focus*, Indiana, American Trust Publications

(10) Hamidullah Muhammad (1979). *Introduction to Islam*, London, MWH Publishers

(11) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al- Azhar Colleges Press.

(12) Ahmed, A. F. (2006); "*Shī'ah*." in the *Encyclopaedia of the Arts*; http://www.cardinetnigeria com//lasu/arts/publications/index.html/

(13) Ibn Al-Jawzī Al-Baghdādī (1419 /1999), *Tablīs Iblīs*, Cairo, Dārul-Manār.

(14) M.A. Khan (nd.), *The Pious Caliphs of Islam, Uthman (R)*, (Kuwait: Africa Muslims Agency.

(15) M.A. Khan (nd.), *The Pious Caliphs of Islam, Ali (R)*, (Kuwait: Africa Muslims Agency.

Assignment File

In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignments will be found in the Assignment File itself and later in this *Course Guide* in the section on assessment.

Assessment

Your assessment will be based on tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and a final examination which you will write at the end of the course.

Tutor - Marked Assignments (TMA)

Every unit contains at least one or two assignments. You are advised to work through all the assignments and submit them for assessment. Your tutor will assess the assignments and select four, which will constitute the 30% of your final grade. The tutor-marked assignments may be presented to you in a separate file. Just know that for every unit there are some tutor-marked assignments for you. It is important you do them and submit for assessment.

Final Examination and Grading

At the end of the course, you will write a final examination, which will constitute 70% of your final grade. In the examination, which shall last for two hours, you will be requested to answer three questions out of at least five questions.

Course Marking Scheme

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments	Four assignments, best three marks of the four count at 30% of course marks
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Presentation Schedule

The Presentation Schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

Course Overview and Presentation Schedule

Unit	**Title of Work**	**Weeks Activity**	
Module 1: The Preliminaries			
Unit 1	**Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology**	**Week 1**	**Assignment 1**
Unit 2	**Significance of Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) as an Article of Faith.**	**Week 2**	**Assignment 2**
Unit 3	**The Concept of *Īmān***	**Week 3**	**Assignment 3**
Unit 4	***An-Nubuwwah* and *ar-Risālah***	**Week 4**	**Assignment 4**
Module 2	**Development of Muslim *Firaq***		
Unit 1	**The Jabarites, the Qadarites , the Murjites and Consequences of Grave sin**	**Week 5**	**Assignment 1**
Unit 2	**Al-*Khawārij* (The Kharijites)**	**Week 6**	**Assignment 2**
Unit 3	**The *Shī'ah***	**Week 7**	**Assignment 3**
Unit 4	**Extremist Shī'ites (*Ghulātu sh-Shī'ah*)**	**Week 8**	**Assignment 4**

Module 3	***AL –MU'TAZILAH*** **AND** ***AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*** **(the Mutazilites and the Ash'arites)**		
Unit 1	**The Emergence of the *Mu'tazilah* and Their Fundamental Doctrines**	**Week 9**	**Assignment 1**
Unit 2	**The Prominent *Mu'tazilah* and More of their Views**	**Week 10**	**Assignment 2**
Unit 3	**Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines**	**Week 11**	Assignment 3
Unit 4	**Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed**	**Week 12**	**Assignment 4**
Module 4	***Al-Ghaybiyyāt*** **– Belief in the Unseen**		
Unit 1	**Angels, Spirit and Jinni**	**Week 13**	**Assignment 1**
Unit 2	**Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and Enjoyment in the Grave**	Week 14	Assignment 2
Unit 3	**Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror**	Week 15	Assignment 3
Unit 4	**Eschatological Issues III: Sin, Record of Deeds and Recompense**	**Week 16**	**Assignment 4**
Revision			
Examination			
Total			

How To Get The Most From This Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of its great advantages. You can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read, and which are your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the

objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a Reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly, it is your first assignment.
2. Organize a Study Schedule. Design a 'Course Overview' to guide you through the Course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the Semester is available from the study centre. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates and schedule of work for each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please, let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to Unit 1, and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you are studying at any point in time.
6. Work through the unit. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
7. Keep in touch with your Study Centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
8. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
9. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
10. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
11. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the Assignment is returned, pay particular attention

to your tutor's comments, both on the Tutor-Marked Assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.

12. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

Tutors and Tutorials

The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name, telephone number and address of your tutor. Your tutor will mark each assignment. Pay close attention to the comments your tutor might make on your assignments as these will help in your progress. Make sure that assignments reach your tutor on or before the due date. Your tutorials are important, therefore try not to skip any. It is an opportunity to meet your tutor and your fellow students. It is also an opportunity to get the help of your tutor and discuss any difficulties encountered on your reading.

Conclusion

Much as I cannot promise you a too-easy ride on this course, I equally do not envisage much difficulty as long as you play the roles assigned to you in the whole exercise.

Summary

In this Course Guide, we have provided you a general overview of *ISL343: Introduction to Islamic theology* in which students pursuing BA in Islamic Studies programme must earn two credit Units. The Course Aims and Objectives and what learners will gain working through the Course Material and its Study Units are stated clearly at the onset. We have also provided you a list of textbooks and references for your further reading. As an inference in the Guide, to develop an active interest in the Course is a prerequisite for its successful completion. Assess yourself through the Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs). You will equally be assessed for grading purposes through the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs). Thus to do well in the course, you must get yourself organized and try to conform to the presentation schedule.

We wish you success in the course.

TableofContents

Page
Title Page i
Publisher ii
TableofContents iii

MODULE 1: **Origin, *Tawḥīd, Īmān, Nubuwwah* and *Risālah***
Unit 1:Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology 1- 5
Unit 2: Significance of Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawhīd*) as
an Article of Faith 6-11
Unit 3: The Concept of *Īmān* 12-18
Unit 4: *Nubuwwah* and *Risālah* 19-24

MODULE 2: Development of Muslim *Firaq*
Unit 1: The Jabarites, the Qadarites and the Murjites 25-29
Unit 2: The Kharijites (*Khawārij)* 30-34
Unit 3: The *Shī'ah* 35-41
Unit 4: Extremist Shī'ites (*Ghulātu sh-Shī'ah*) 42-47

MODULE 3 *AL – MU'TA ZILAH* AND *AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*
(the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites)
Unit 1: The Emergence of the Mu'tazilites and
Their Fundamental Doctrines 48-57
Unit 2: The Prominent Mu'tazilites and More of their Views. 58-61
Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines 62-67
Unit 4: Biography of Al-Ash'arī and His Short Creed 68-75

MODULE 4: *Al-Ghaybiyyāt* – Belief in the Unseen.
Unit1: Angels, Spirit and Jinns 76-82
Unit 2: Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and
Enjoyment in the Grave 83-88
Unit 3: Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror 89-96
Unit 4: Eschatological Issues III: Sin, Record of Deeds and
Recompense 97-104

MODULE 1: **Origin, *Tawḥīd, Īmān, Nubuwwah* and *Risālah***

Unit 1: Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology
Unit 2: Significance of Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) as an Article of Faith
Unit 3: The Concept of Imān
Unit 4: *Nubuwwah* and *Risālah* (Prophethood and Apostleship)

Unit 1 Background to Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology

CONTENTS

1.1: Introduction
1.2: Learning Outcomes:
1.3: Background to Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology
1.3.1: Definition of Term
1.3.2: Internal Origins of the Emergence of Islamic Theology
1.3.3: External Influence responsible for its growth and development.
1.4: Summary
1.5: References/Further Readings
1.6: Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs).

1. 1. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic theology is the science which studies religious doctrines and provides logical proofs in defense of faith. It also deals with refutation of innovations made by the groups that deviate from the orthodox creed. It may also be described as the study of the nature of the Divine Being and other Islamic religious creeds. Its religious terminology is *'Ilmut-Tawḥīd* which will be explained to you after the next few paragraphs. Many factors, which are either internal or external, contributed to the emergence and development of this science. Some of the factors, which are internal, emanating from Islam and the Muslims themselves, are hereby presented for your reading and digestion in this Module.

1.2 Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

i. Define concept of theology in Islam
ii. Identify some theological points in the Qur'ān.
iii. Discuss the role of the *Ṣaḥābah* in the emergence of Islamic theology.

1.3 Background to Definition and Origin of Islamic Theology

1.3.1 Definition of Term

Ilmut-Tawḥīd is the technical term for the study of theology in Islam. *'Ilm* (pronounced *Ilimi by* West African Muslims) is an Arabic word which connotes science while the variant lexical meaning of the word of *at- Tawḥīd* which is also Arabic includes unification in words, deeds, etc, etc. It derives from the verb *waḥḥada* from which you also have other derivatives such as *waḥdah* (unity), *Wāḥid* or *Wahīd* (being unique, singular, matchless etc). This also denotes that Being which is Unique and Incomparable in His existence, the almighty Allah.

In the Arabic lexicon, the first letter (*waw*) of the Arabic word *waḥad* is interchangeable with (*alif*) and thus it becomes *aḥad*. This is the word that is used for Allah in the *Sūratul-Ikhlāş*, Chapter 112 of the Holy Qur'ān. It means that Allah, the most High is Unique and Incomparable in His Being and Attributes. There is no one like Him, either in His Being or Attributes, and even remotely conjoined with Him.

Ilmut-Tawḥīd connotes Islamic Theology. It studies various beliefs in Islam and probes into the origin and development of theological schools. *At-Tawḥīd* (Islamic Monotheism) has three aspects (1) Unity in the Being of Allah as the Creator and the Sustainer of Creatures (2) Unity in the Worship of Allah, and (3) Unity in the Attributes of Allah. These will be extensively dealt with in a separate unit below.

Ilmul-'Aqīdah (Creed) and *Uşūlud-Dīn* (Bases of Religion) are two other terms interchangeably used for *Tawḥīd* when the science of Islamic theology is intended.
Specializations in this science are mostly offered in Faculties or *Uşūlu d-Dīn* Units in countries where Islamic Universities are established.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Discuss the term ***ilmut-Tawḥīd***.
2. Give the terms applicable to Islamic theology.

1.3.2: Internal Origins of the Emergence of Islamic Theology

(1) *Qur'ān*ic Origin

The *Qur'ān*, as is well-known calls to absolute monotheism and upholding of other five Islamic articles of faith. It deals with the major sects and religions that were widespread during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It refutes their principles and points to their falsehood. For instance, in the Qur'an 45:24, it mentions the materialists who rejected God, Prophets and religion in its entirety and refutes their arguments by saying, "they have nothing to prove their claim and they are only making conjectures". It discusses polytheism in all its ramifications and condemns it unequivocally. In 4:48 it says those who associate partners with God have fabricated fatal sin, and in 4:116 it says they have gone far astray. In 4:48/116 it says "*shirk*" (associating partner with God) is the most unpardonable sin. In 5:17&72, it condemns those who claim divinity of Prophet Īsā (Jesus) and says they are infidels. It also corrects the idea of sonship of Prophet Īsā and says in 3:59 'the likeness of Isa to Allah is truly as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, be, and he was. And on Trinity it says in 4:171 O people of the Book, exceed not the limit in your religion nor speak anything about Allah but the truth. The Messiah, Īsā , son of Maryam, is only a Messenger of Allah and His word, which he communicated to Mary, and Mercy from Him. So believe in Allah and His Messengers, and say not three. Desist, it is better for you. Allah is only One God. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And sufficient is Allah as having charge of affairs.

Furthermore, the Holy Book argues with those who did not believe in the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Judgment when they asked "Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? It replies: "Say, He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first". It also contains issues of predestination and free will and it commands the Prophet to deliver the messages from his Lord and to debate with his opponents when it says in 16:125 "call to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and godly exhortation and argue with them in the best manner.

Of course Muslim theologians pursued this *Qur'ān*ic injunctions and examples by going into debate with the opponents of Islam, widening the range of their defense whenever the antagonists widened the range of their attack. Eventually, this led to the emergence and development of speculative theology of Islam known as *Ilmul-Kalām*.

(ii) Origin from the Prophetic Tradition

There are many traditional sayings of the Prophet (SAW) which indicate the division of the Muslim Community into seventy three or seventy two sects or theological groups. Accordingly, the Islamic scholars have projected that the origin of these groups can be traced to six (6) early Islamic sects or theological groups. These are; *al-Ḥarawriyyah, al-Qadariyyah, al-Jahmiyyah*, *al-Murji'ah*, *ar-Rāfiḍah*, and *al-Jabariyyah*. However, each of these sects or theological groups has been divided into twelve (12) also, making their total number to be seventy two (72). The Islamic scholars have also mentioned the twelve theological groups into which each of them is divided and concluded that every Muslim's attitudes towards the Islamic theology will determine which of the sects he belongs to. They also conclude that any Muslim who practices Islam based on the manner in which it was practiced by the Prophet and his Companions falls into the acceptable theological group hence they are the saved sect or group.

The assassination of the third and fourth Caliphs of Islam, 'Uthmān Bn 'Affān (d. 656 A.H.) and 'Alī Bn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661 A.H.) respectively also contributed to the divison of Muslims into theological groups. These included; *ʿUthmānīs; Shiʿah, Ahlus-sunnah wal-Jamāʿah* and the *Murhibah* (those in the battle field as at the time of assassination of the third Caliph). ʿUthmānīs and *Murhibah* were temporary political groups while both Shīʿites and *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah* still exist till today in the shape of permanent theological groups.

(iii) The Role of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet Muhammad)

After the demise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims began to raise questions on seemingly contradictory points of the new religion with the view to studying and harmonizing them. This phenomenon is not peculiar to Islam but general to all known religions. Initially, all religions are based on simple but strong doctrines on which adherents will all agree and believe without any tendency for criticism or philosophy. Then, there will follow the period of criticism, reconsideration and application of logical and philosophical rules. The theologians would thus seek the aid of logic and philosophy to strengthen their viewpoints and buttress their ideas. This was the case with Judaism, Christianity; and Islam was not an exception.

For instance, the early Muslims believed in pre-destination of both good and evil. They believed that whatever man did have been predestined for him by God. Their belief in that was total and unflinching. But as time went by, a group of Muslims appeared who collected the verses that are related to the issue in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* studying and criticizing them. They discovered that there was a verse, which reads:

> Those who disbelieve- it is alike to them whether thou warn them or warn them not, they will not believe. (Q.2:6).

This verse and others like it indicate that some people have been destined to be unbelievers and yet they are requested to believe. On the other hand, the Qur'ān is full of verses, which show that nothing prevents any person from believing. He is completely free to make his choice between belief and unbelief.

How will it be possible to harmonize all these verses? Has man freedom of choice or has he been predestined to do certain things? These and other questions are raised on these issues. They were studied thoroughly and with the application of both logic and philosophy. This led to the emergence of various views and schools of thought, which shall be fully examined later.

(iv) Politics i.e. Issue of Succession to the Prophet (S)
Differences of opinion on who should succeed the Prophet in the leadership roles he was playing while he was alive also led to differences of opinion in religious matters. Thus, political parties became religious sects. From the party of Ali emerged the Shiites. Those who disagreed with referring their disputes to arbitration panel (*taḥkīm)* among his soldiers formed themselves into a party called *khawārij* while those who resented dispute among the Muslims were known as Murjites.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

3. Discuss the various factors responsible for the emergence of Islamic theology.

1.3.3: External Influence responsible for its growth and development.

The factors enumerated below can be said to be the external sources contributing to the growth and development of the science of Islamic theology (*ilmut-Tawḥīd*):

(i) the new converts to Islam from other religions such as Christianity, Judaism, atheism and others manifested the doctrines of their old religions in a new form in their new religion.

(ii) The Mu ‘tazilites took up the defenses of Islam against the attacks of Jews and Christians and equipped themselves with philosophical weapons so as to enable them combat them on their own ground.

(iii) The need for theologians to use philosophical and logical arguments in defense of faith compelled them to study it and refute their wild claims.

(iv) Being inspired by the new faith, the Muslims of Arabia underwent a career of conquest of one country after another, and wherever they went, they carried Islam along with them. The Persians embraced the religion and became new converts to Islam. The Persians as a nation were superior to the Arabs and they, especially the upper class among them, could not shake off their own heritage. They developed an idea of superiority complex and introduced many new elements and ideas of their own into Islamic culture. They were responsible for introducing mystic tendencies and theory of divinely appointed *Imām* in Islamic thought.

(v) When the Muslims flourished in trade and commerce, they came in close contact with the Indians. As a matter of fact, Indian culture, especially Buddhism and Vedantism and their mystic tendency exerted a significant influence on the development of Muslim philosophy, especially Islamic mysticism. It was during the Abbasid period that the Indian ideas reached the Muslims first.

Self Assessment Excercise 3 (SAEs)

4. Enumerate, with explanation, some of the external factors that may be regarded as contributing to the emergence of *Ilmut-Tawḥīd*. (Islamic Theology).

1.4: Summary

We conclude this unit that '*Ilmut-Tawḥīd* is the term for Islamic theology. '*Ilmul- 'Aqīdah*, (Study of Creed), *Uşūlud-īn* (Basis of Religion) and *'Ilmul-Kalām* are other terms interchangeably used for the science. The science originated from the *Qur'ān*ic discussion of the Islamic articles of faith, the views of the atheists, polytheists, Jews and beliefs of the Christians. Debates by the Companions on seemingly contradicting issues in the Qur'ān and crises arising from the question of who would succeed the Prophet Muhammad after his death further contributed to the emergence of the Science. Converts to Islam from Christianity and Judaism, the need for theologians to use philosophical and logical arguments in defence of faith, and the influence of the Persian and Indian cultures are external factors that helped the growth of the science. Therefore, this unit traces the origin of the Muslim theology to the Qur'ān and the early Muslims who were Companions

of the Prophet Muhammad. Its suggests that its subsequent development was not due to single but different factors both internal and external. It concludes that the external factors should not be regarded as the soul source of the Muslim theology. They merely helped its growth and development at a later stage.

1.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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1.6 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAEs 1

1. The study of theology in Islam is technically called *Ilmut-Tawḥīd* in Arabic. The word *'Ilm* as pronounced *Ilimi by* West African Muslims is an Arabic word which connotes science while the variant lexical meaning of the word of *at- Tawḥīd* which is also Arabic includes unification in words, deeds, etc, etc. When the *waḥad* is interchanged with (*alif*) it becomes *aḥad* which is used for Allah in the *Sūratul-Ikhlāṣ*, Chapter 112 of the Holy Qur'ān. It means that Allah, the most

High is Unique and Incomparable in His Being and Attributes. There is no one like Him, either in His Being or Attributes, and even remotely conjoined with Him. *Ilmut-Tawḥīd* studies various beliefs in Islam and probes into the origin and development of theological schools. *At-Tawḥīd* (Islamic Monotheism) has three aspects (1) Unity in the Being of Allah as the Creator and the Sustainer of Creatures (2) Unity in the Worship of Allah, and (3) Unity in the Attributes of Allah. These will be extensively dealt with in a separate unit below.

2. The two other terms interchangeably used for *Tawḥīd* when the science of Islamic theology is intended are *Ilmul-ʻAqīdah* (Creed) and *Uṣūlud-Dīn* (Bases of Religion)

Answers to SAEs 2

3. Various factors responsible for the emergence of Islamic theology are based on the Internal Origins. Its origin started from the Qur'an which calls to absolute monotheism and upholding of other five Islamic articles of faith. The Qur'an 45:24, 4:48, 4:116 and others deal with the Islamic theology. The Prophetic Tradition also indicates the division of the Muslim Community into seventy three or seventy two sects or theological groups. Another issue that contributed to the emergence of Islamic theology is the issue of assassination of the third and fourth Caliphs of Islam, ʻUthmān Bn ʻAffān (d. 656 A.H.) and ʻAlī Bn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661 A.H.) respectively as well as the Role of the *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet Muhammad). After the demise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims began to raise questions on seemingly contradictory points of the new religion with the view to studying and harmonizing them. The politics i.e. issue of Succession to the Prophet (S) that generated differences of opinion on who should succeed the Prophet in the leadership roles he was playing while he was alive also led to differences of opinion in religious matters.

Answers to SAEs 3

4. Following are the external sources contributing to the growth and development of the science of Islamic theology (*ilmut-Tawḥīd*):

(i) the new converts to Islam from other religions such as Christianity, Judaism, atheism and others manifested the doctrines of their old religions in a new form in their new religion.

(ii) The Mu ʻtazilites took up the defenses of Islam against the attacks of Jews and Christians and equipped themselves with philosophical weapons so as to enable them combat them on their own ground.

(iii) The need for theologians to use philosophical and logical arguments in defense of faith compelled them to study it and refute their wild claims.

(iv) Being inspired by the new faith, the Muslims of Arabia underwent a career of conquest of one country after another, and wherever they went, they carried Islam along with them. The Persians embraced the religion and became new converts to Islam. The Persians as a nation were superior to the Arabs and they, especially the upper class among them, could not shake off their own heritage. They developed an idea of superiority complex and introduced many new elements and ideas of their own into Islamic culture. They were responsible for introducing mystic tendencies and theory of divinely appointed *Imām* in Islamic thought.

(v) When the Muslims flourished in trade and commerce, they came in close contact with the Indians. As a matter of fact, Indian culture, especially Buddhism and Vedantism and their mystic tendency exerted a significant influence on the development of Muslim philosophy, especially Islamic mysticism. It was during the Abbasid period that the Indian ideas reached the Muslims first.

UNIT 2: BELIEF IN UNITY OF ALLAH (*TAWḤĪD*) AS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH

CONTENTS

2.1: Introduction
2.2: Learning Outcomes
2.3: Background to Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) as an Article of Faith
2.3.1: Unity of Allah in His Being (*dhātihī*)
2.3.2: Unity of Allah in Worshipping Him.
2.3.3: Unity of Allah in His Attributes
2,4: Summary
2.5: References/Further Readings
2.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises

2.1: INTRODUCTION

You have been told in Unit One that '*Ilmut-Tawḥīd* is one of the terms for the science of Islamic theology. You have also been told that the word *Tawhīd* signifies belief in the Unity of Allah. Let us quickly remind you that the significance of this word is like the significance of the formula of testimony to the unity of Allah *Lā ilāha illā Allah*. Since this term *Tawḥīd* occupies a very important position in Islam and Islamic theology we shall now discuss it again in some details.

2.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) Explain the belief in the Unity of Allah as it relates to His divine Being.
(ii) Expatiate on worshipping Him alone
(iii) Discuss the belief as it relates to Unity of Allah in His Attributes
(iv) Enumerate some of the benefits/impacts the belief has on the beliver.

2.3: Background to Belief in Unity of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) as an Article of Faith

2.3.1: Unity in the Being of Allah (*Dhāt/Ulūhiyyah*)

The faith in the unity of Allah is to believe that Allah is unique in his Being, incomparable with originated thing and without any partners; He has no wife, nor children; neither does He have mother or father; He is not a part of any other being, nor any other being is a part of Him.

The Jews believed Uzair (AS) to be the son of Allah, while the Christians believed Jesus (AS) to be the son of Allah. The word of Allah, the Most High, has contradicted both of these beliefs as false-hood:

> The Jews call Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Jesus the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. … How they are deluded away from the truth! (Q.9:30)

The pagans of Makkah designated Angels as the daughters of Allah. Allah (SWT) condemns their false belief, thus:

> Yet they make the jinns equal with Allah, though Allah, did create the Jinns; and they falsely attribute to Him, sons and daughters without knowledge. Praise and glory be to Him! (He is) above what they attribute to Him!" (Q.6:100).

Some polytheists considered creatures, such as Angels, Jinns or some mankind to be merged in the Being of Allah (SWT) which they called *Ḥulūl*. Some considered Allah to be merged in every thing of the universe called the theory of unity of creation (*waḥdatu* l-*wujūd*, everything is He). Allah the most high has condemned all such false beliefs in the Holy *Qur'ān*:

> Yet they attribute to some of His servants a share with Him (in His god head)! Truly is man a blasphemous ingrate avowed! (Q. 43:15)

These verses of the Qur'ān are a proof that Allah (SWT) has no wife, nor children, nor mother nor father, and neither is His Holy Being merged in any object (animate nor inanimate); He is not a part of any other thing, nor any other thing in the universe (animate or inanimate) is merged in His being (SWT). Neither is any other thing part of the being of Allah, nor any creature is born from Allah's *Nūr* (light); nor any creature a part and portion of His light.

When the Messenger invited the pagans of Makkah to believe in Allah Who has no partners, they asked him about the genealogy of the being towards Whom he was calling them, of what He is made, what does He eat and drink? From whom He has inherited and who will be His successor? In answer to these queries Allah (SWT) revealed Chapter 112 of the Glorious Qur'ān (*Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ).*

> Say, He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the upon Whom all depend; He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like Him. (Q.112:1-4).

As established by the passages of the glorious Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet, it should be borne in mind, while considering the unity of being of Allah (*Tawḥīd*) that He is occupying Glorious Throne high above. But His knowledge and power encompasse everything.

As against believing in the unity of Allah in His being in the above manners, it is heretical to believe that some one is the son or daughter of Allah or to say that some among His creation is a part and portion of His Being or to consider that the Being of Allah is present in every thing and every where. All such notions are called polytheism (*shirk*).

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Explain belief in the Unity of Allah as it relates to His divine Being.

2.3.2 Unity of Allah in Worship:

As an outcome of belief in unity of Allah in His essence, it follows that every form of worship should be for Allah only and no one else should be joined in it. In the Holy Qur'ān the word worship, is used in two different meanings. Firstly, it is used in the form of adoration or devotion as narrated in the verse:

> Adore not the sun and the moon but adore Allah Who created them if it is Him ye wish to serve." (Q.41:37).

Secondly, worship is used in the sense of obedience and subordination as in Q.36:60):

> Did I not enjoin on you, you children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan? Certainly he was to you an avowed enemy.

In the first sense, worship includes every form of prayer and actions similar to it, such as standing with folded arms, bowing down, prostration, oblation and offering charity, sacrifices, circumambulation (as of Ka'ba), seclusion (*I'tikāf*), retreat (*Khalwah*), and supplication (*Du'ā'),* seeking help and succour (*Istighāthah*), seeking protection, and pleasure, placing trust and

reliance (as in Allah), fear and love. Every form of the above mentioned acts of worship should be for Allah alone. If a single form of worship as noted above is performed for any other except Allah it would amount to polytheism (*shirk*).

In the second sense of worship, viz., obedience, service and subordination, Unity of Allah in worship will be that in all worldly dealings obedience and subordination should be one of the Commands of Allah alone and His laws. To ignore the commands of Allah and follow the commands or laws of others, be it one's own passions or of one's own ancestors, religious or political leaders, Satan or anything evil, in the same manner will be polytheism in worship, just as it is polytheism to include any creature in the worship of Allah. Allah declares in Q.25:43:

> Have you (O Muhammad) seen him who
> has taken as his god his own desire?"

In this verse to follow one's own passion is called making passion one's own god which is declared as polytheism. Also note the passage in which Allah declares obedience of Satan or following him to be polytheism:

> But the evil ones ever inspire their friends
> to contend with you. If you were to obey
> them you would indeed be pagan.
> (Q.6:121)

> If any do fail to judge by the light of what
> Allah has revealed, they are no better than
> unbelievers.

In Q.5: 45 - 47, Allah has referred to those who do not judge according to the Commands and the Laws of Allah as wrong doers and rebels. In other words, to follow the laws of others in preference to the Commands and Laws of Allah, is also considered *shirk*, unbelief and a rebellion.

Keeping in view of these two aspects of the meaning of worship, the Unity of Allah in worship would mean that every form of worship ie. Prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, poor-due, charity, bowing down and prostration, offerings and oblation, circumbulation, retreat supplication, beseeching, seeking help and making complaints, obedience and servitude and subordination are reserved for Allah alone. In any of the above modes of worship, to join any creature along with Allah will be polytheism in worship.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. What does belief in unity in worshipping Allah mean to you?

2.3.3: Unity of Allah in His Attributes:

The Unity of Allah in His attributes comprises unalloyed belief in all His attributes as described in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* and that in all His attributes Allah is unique, incomparable and peerless. The attributes of Allah are countless and so many that it is not possible to enumerate them, nor to comprehend them in imagination. Allah declares in Q.18:109):

> Say (O Muhammad to Mankind), "If the sea were ink (with which to write) the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be exhausted, even if We brought (another sea) like it for its aid.

And He also declares in Q.31: 27:

> And if all the trees on the Earth were pens and the sea (were ink with which to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

In the above two verses "Words mean Attributes of Allah. According to the two verses you should never be surprised that the Attributes of Allah are really as unlimited that the pens made out of all the trees in this world and the ink of the ocean cannot write about all of them.

Here, as an example, we will discuss only one attribute, from which assumption about other attributes can be made; about how true are the sayings of the Holy Qur'ān based on reality. One attribute of Allah is of hearing, Who always hears. Consider how Allah is hearing the supplications, complaints, whisperings and conversations of millions of human beings simultaneously, not for some days or some months or some years but has been doing so for thousands of years and in taking decisions separately for every individual, He never felt any difficulty or fatigue. Imagine how, during the *Ḥajj* at the plain of *ʿArafat*, where between two and three million people continuously supplicate before their Creator; Allah hears the complaints of every individual, and is acquainted with the wants and desires of every one and is aware of the secrets of the hearts of every one and then according to

His plan, makes decisions separately for every individual. He never forgets, nor is there any oppression and neither does He feel any difficulty. Moreover even at the same time, apart from those at the plain of ʿ*Arafat*, Allah is hearing the conversations, supplications, complaints etc of millions of people around the world.

All this is about one species: man, "inhabiting the universe." Similar is the case of the Jinns who like human beings are busy in the worship and service of Allah. It is not known how many jinns, at any one time are busy beseeching Allah, Who is listening to them, Who fulfils their wants and desires. Apart from the jinns and human beings there are other creatures of Allah viz. angels who are continuously busy in praising and sanctifying Allah Who is hearing them also.

Apart from the jinns, human beings and angels there are innumerable other creatures who inhabit the land whose number is known to Allah. All of them are engaged in praising and sanctifying Allah Who listens to them. Similarly countless other creatures living in oceans and the rivers and flying in the air are all praising and sanctifying Him. The blessed being of Allah is listening to the prayers of each and every one of them.

Apart from the living creatures other objects in the Universe such as stones, trees, sun, stars, earth and sky, mountains and even the smallest particles in the Universe are engaged in praising and sanctifying Him, and to which Allah is attentive. It is said that apart from this world of ours there are many other objects in the Universe in which several other creatures live. If this were true then Allah is also hearing their prayers. Consider, Allah is hearing such countless animate and inanimate creatures praising and sanctifying Him and this does not tire Him nor keep Him from His other works nor does it affect the smooth functioning of the Universe.

The reality is that just one attribute of Allah viz.: **"One who listens"** is such that to understand it fully is not only far off but even to imagine it is difficult. From the study of this just one attribute of Allah namely **"Hearing"** may be assumed the incomprehensibility of understanding His infinite other attributes such as: the Sovereign, the Creator, the Provider, the Bestower of Forms, the Exalted in Might, the Supreme, the Seer, Aware of all, the Knowing, the Wise, the Compassionate, the Generous, High in Dignity, the Subsisting, the Great Forgiver, the Merciful, the Great One, the Strong, the Approver, the Watcher, the Laudable, the Powerful, the First, the Last, the Acceptor of Repentance, the Kind, the Independent, Blessed art Thou and Dignified and Bestowed of Bounties etc. and then ponder over the two above-mentioned verses of ***Sura Al-Kah'f*** and ***Sūra Luqmān*** as to how

Allah the Generous has spoken the Truth. To include any other creature in all the Attributes or in any one of the attributes will be polytheism in regard to His Attributes. In addition, any of His attributes should not be compared with those of His creatures because He is unlike any of His creatures.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Discuss the uniqueness of Allah in His Attributes.
4. Illustrate belief in the uniqueness of Allah in His attributes with one example.

2.4 Summary

Tawḥīd as technical term connotes monotheism which signifies unity of Allah in His Being, in worshipping Him and in His attributes. It is heretical to believe that some one is the son or daughter of Allah or to say that some among His creation is a part and portion of His Being or to consider that the Being of Allah is present in every thing and every where. All such notions are called polytheism (*shirk*).

The Unity of Allah in worship would mean that every form of worship is reserved for Allah alone. The various ways by which people join any creature along with Allah in worshipping Him will be polytheism in worship.

The Unity of Allah in His attributes comprises unalloyed belief in all the countless description of Allah in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* and that in all His attributes Allah is unique. The impact faith in the unity of Allah in His essence (*dhātihī*), in worshipping Him, and in His works, attributes (*ṣifātihī*) will have on the faithful is hereby summarized as follows:

(i) **Steadfastness**: "Allah will establish in strength those who believe with – the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter." Thus, whether it is the storms of the false faiths, assaults of grief and sorrow, or cruelties of tyrannical rulers or evil men, nothing can shake the conviction of a believer in the Unity of Allah. The much needed steadfastness required to answer properly the questioning of the Angels, Munkir and Nakeer, in the grave shall also be found in him.

(ii) **Safety from Superstition and Respect for Mankind:**
Polytheism involves human beings in many superstitions: fear of gods and goddesses, of natural phenomena, of Jinn, of tyrannical rulers etc etc.

Convinction by the Unity of Allah makes man free from these fears and grants him freedom, body and soul.

> We have honoured the sons of Adam, made them ride in-land and on water-ways and provide them beneficial sustenance, and We place them above many of Our creatures.

(iv) **Faith in Unity and Equality of Mankind:**
Allah the One created Adam from clay and all the other human being from Adam. All of them have equal rights.The entire mankind is of one class before God; all the human beings should bow down before the one Creator, should obey the Commands and the Laws of the One Being, and consider themselves as servants of the One Being Allah.

(iv) **Spiritual Peacefulness:** There are thousands of signs present within man to testify to the Unity of Allah. Every thing in the Universe supports this Unity of Allah. From his very births man is created a Unitarian. In the Holy Qur'ān Allah declares:

> So (Oh Muhammad) set your face towards the religion of pure Islamic Monotheism, (*Ḥanīfiyyah* i. e. to worship Allah Alone**)** Allah's "*Fiṭrah*" (human nature), with which he has created mankind. (Q. 30:30)

2.5 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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2.6 Possible Answers to SAEs

Answers to SAEs 1

1. The faith in the unity of Allah is to believe that Allah is unique in His Being, and incomparable with any creature and without any partners. This is better explained in the Qur'an Chapter 111.

Answers to SAEs 2

2. As an outcome of belief in unity of Allah in His essence, it follows that every form of worship should be for Allah only and no one else should be joined in it.
(Q.41:37).

Answers to SAEs 3

3. The Unity of Allah in His attributes comprises unalloyed belief in all His attributes as described in the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* and that in all His attributes Allah is unique, incomparable and peerless. The attributes of Allah are countless and so many that it is not possible to enumerate them, nor to comprehend them in imagination. Allah declares in Q.18:109).

4. Here, as an example, we will discuss only one attribute, from which assumption about other attributes can be made; about how true are the sayings of the Holy Qur'ān based on reality. One attribute of Allah is of hearing, Who always hears. Consider how Allah is hearing the supplications, complaints, whisperings and conversations of millions of human beings simultaneously, not for some days or some months or some years but has been doing so for thousands of years and in taking decisions separately for every individual, He never felt any difficulty or fatigue.

Unit 3: The Concept of *Īmān*

CONTENTS

3.1: Introduction
3.2: Learning Outcomes
3.3: Background to the Concept of *Īmān*
3.3.1: View points of the *Sunnī*s (i.e. Muslim Majority; the Ash'arites and the Māturidites).
3.3.2: Proof that means conviction only and that declaration and actions are not parts of its reality.
3.3.3: The School of Thought of Abu Hanifah and His Followers
3.3.4: The Views of the Kharijites, the Mu'tazilites, the Jurists and the Traditionists.
3.3.5: Relationship between the Word Islam and *Īmān* and its legal implication.
3.3.6. Increase and Decease of *Īmān.*
3.4: Summary
3.5: References/Further Readings
3.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

3.1: INTRODUCTION

The term *Īmān* (meaning faith or belief) is very significant in Islam. It is the pivot around which the rest of the principles and pillars of the religion revolves. In other words all other deeds of man are a waste or at a loss for lack of *Īmān*. Thus the word occupies a special position in Islamic theology. This Unit therefore welcomes you to a detailed discussion of the term presenting the view-points of the various schools of Islamic theology.

3.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

- Relate the significance of the term *Īmān* from the view-points of the various Islamic schools of theology and their bases.
- Give the basis for the stand of the various schools
- Explain the relatioship between *Īmān* and Islam
- Highlight the legal implication of Islam and *Īmān* as in the conetext of Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*
- Judge whether *Īmān* accepts increase or decrease.

3.3: Background to the Concept of *Īmān*

3.3.1: View points of the Sunnis (i.e. Muslim Majority; the Asharites and the Maturidites

Three schools of Islamic theology have given divergent view-points on the concept of faith in Islam. These are stated for you here as follows:

According to the Ash'arites' majority and the Maturidites, *Īmān* implies convinction in the heart (*a`t-Taşdīq al-Qalbī*), submission, to be pleased and to accept the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S). Conviction in this regard without submission is not *Īmān*. Thus whoever knows the mission of the Prophet Muhammad but refuses to submit to it is an infidel. Allah (SWT) says: "They know him as they know their children but a group of them conceals the truth knowingly. Belief in the unity of God, Apostles and Angels, Obligation of observance of *Ṣalāt* and prohibition of adultery are examples of the Prophet's mission.

To have faith in the Angels, the Prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān and those not mentioned is another example of the mission of the Prophet. In this regard, denial of the prophethood of any of the Prophets by a *Mukallaf* will lead to been declared an infidel. The common man may however not be declared an infidel unless he had earlier on been taught. Abstention from all filthy acts like adultery or fornication, theft and the likes of these grievous sins should be perceived as parts of the prohibitions in the prophetic mission.

In this regard, utterance of the *Shahādatayn* is conditional to the application of mundane judgments. Since conviction is in the heart it then implies there must be proof for interacting with the person like a believer. Thus whoever has faith in his heart, but refuses to utter it in words without any excuse or refusal, is a believer in the sight of Allah but an unbeliever in mundane judgements. The dumb and he who dies shortly after his confessional statement are to be regarded as believers in both. The intransigent is an unbeliever in the sight of Allah and in the sight of men. But whoever affirms openly but denies in his heart is an unbeliever in the sight of Allah, a believer in the sight of men as long as we cannot see any act of infidelity from him such as desecration of the *Musḥaf* (the Glorious Qur'ān).

This discussion of making confessional statement is in respect of an unbeliever who wants to embrace Islam. The children of believers are born believers even if confessional statements are not uttered by them.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Examine the concept of *Īmān* from the point of view of the Asharites' majority and the Maturidites.

3.3.2: Proof that *Īmān* means conviction only and that declaration and actions are not parts of its reality.

(i) Divine words which say: "It is they who have faith inscribed in their hearts". "….And his heart is at peace with faith". "And when faith enters into your heart". The Holy Prophet (SAW) says: "O Lord make firm my heart on the religion". All these are evidence that the place of faith is the heart. In other words, faith is in the heart while actions are performed by the parts of the body.

(ii) Linguistically, *Īmān* connotes conviction and there is nothing to prove that the word has implication of conviction, proclamation and action.

(iii) The opposite of *Īmān* is *kufr* which implies intransigence. Since its place is the heart then the place of its opposite which is *Īmān* should be the heart.

Furthermore, the proof that the significance of *Īmān* is exclusive of confession are: divine words which say "except one who is compelled and his heart is at peace with *Īmān*. This shows that lack of confession cannot necessitate negation of *Īmān*.

This school of theology also buttresses the view that deeds are not part of reality of *Īmān* with the following:

(i) Allah's mention of deed after mentioning of *Īmān* which implies they are not the same. He (SWT) says: "Those who believe and do good deeds…"

(ii) His command of action after establishment of faith: "O ye who believe fasting is ordained on you…."

He (SWT) joins faith with disobedience when He says: "Those who believe and do not cover their faith with wrong doing…"

(iii) The coming together of *Īmān* and sins "those who belief and do not mix their faith with injustice; and if two parties among the believers fight each other"

(iv) *Īmān* being made conditional for the validity of deed thus impliying difference of the conditioned from the condition. Allah says "whosoever do good deeds and he is a believer shall never be denied of his reward".

(v) Prophet's limitation of his explanation of *Īmān* to conviction in his reply to Angel Jibril's question.

This school of thought is seen as the best concerning concept of *Īmān* in Islam.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Buttress the stand of the Orthodox on the concept of *Īmān* with quotations from Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

3.3.3: The School of Thought of Abu Hanifah and His Followers

In the opinion of Abu Hanifah and his followers, *Īmān* (faith) implies conviction in the heart and pronouncement of the *Shahādatayn* (the twin formula of testimony to the unity of Allah and apostleship of the Prophet Muhammad (*at-taşdiq wal-iqrār*).
Īmān is thus a name given to actions of the heart and the tongue. In other words, verbal attestation of faith is a part of reality of *Īmān*. Whoever fails to make the statement at least once in his life time will not be adjudged a believer, neither by Allah nor by the believers. It is the dumb who is exempted because he has excuse for not making it.

Abu Hanifah and his supporters buttressed their view with the prophetic saying: "I have been commanded to fight people until they utter *Lā ilāha illāllāh*." And he who utters *Lā ilāha illāllāh* has himself and his wealth protected except with right and his judgement is left with Allah".

In refutation of this, it is said that the *Ḥadīth* only meant that application of Islamic rules upon a living human being in this world is conditional to the pronouncement of the formula. Consequent upon it is safety of blood and property not necessarily salvation in the hereafter; because deeds of the tongue have no effect in the hereafter. "Whoever disbelieve after his belief, unless by compulsion, while his heart is at peace with faith", and "Certaily the hypocrites are at the bottom of the hell-fire" are two Qur'ānic passages confirming that the act of the tongue has no effect in the hereafter unless they emanate from the right belief.

Self Assessment exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Which opinion do you see as more sound between that of the Ash'arites and that of the Hanifites on the concept of *Īmān* and its basis, and why?

3.3.4: The Views of the Kharijites, the Mu'tazilites, the Jurists and the Traditionists.

The Kharijites, Mutazilites, and some Jurists and Traditionists give the concept of *Īmān* as accompanying conviction of the heart and proclamation of the *Shahādatain* (Lā *Illāha iIlāllāhu Muhammad Rasūlullah)* with action.

The Kharijites maintained that conviction, proclamation and action constitute three parts of faith; and that they are of the same category. Whoever lacks any of the three parts should be considered a *kāfir*.

As for the Mutazilites, they maintained that absence of conviction of the heart and proclamation in words renders one *kāfir* while lack of action puts one in between *Īmān* and *kufr* (i.e. *manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). He is called by them a *fāsiq* who will be perpetual in hell fire. They buttress their point of view with the following:

1. that the disobedient shall abide in hell while a *Mū'min* shall not. "He who
   disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then goes beyond His limits shall enter hell and abide therein. He (SWT) also says: "Whosoever kills a believer intentionally shall have hell as his reward abiding in it".
2. Disappearance of faith in the face of disobedient action. The Holy Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said " An adulterer ceases to be a *Mū'min* when he is committing adultery. "

The Majority debunked this claim by saying that what is intended by *mashī'ah* in the passage is *shirk*; and what is intended by *qatl* is its legitimization; and that the intention in the perpetuity in hell is prolonged stay; and that the *Ḥadīth* only negated perfect faith. This is supported by the Prophets statement: "Whoever proclaims lā *Illāha iIlāllāhu* will be admitted in Paradise even if he fornicates or steels whether Abu Dharr likes or not".

The Jurist and the Traditionalists are of the opinion that all these divisions/parts (action, speech and thought) are not of the same category. He

who lacks conviction in his heart (*taṣdīq*) lacks faith which will result to Salvation in the hereafter. Lack of *Īmān* on which mundane judgements are based follows lack of declaration (*Iqrār*). And where action is lacking perfect faith lacks. "Surely the faithful ones are those who when Allah is mentioned, there hearts tremble and when His sign is read to them, it increases them in faith…" These are indeed the true faithful ones. And also Allah says: "Surely the believers have succeeded… These are they that shall be the inheritors of Paradise..." And the Holy Prophet (SAW) says: faith is seventy (70) plus, while modesty is part of faith".

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Examine the three components of *Īmān* according to Kharijites, the Mu'tazilites, the Jurists and the Traditionists.

3.3.5: Relationship between the Words Islam and *Īmān* and its legal implication

This discussion on the word "Islam" is only to explain its linguistic and legal significance and its relationship with *Īmān*. Linguistically, Islam means submission openly and secretly. On its legal implication there are diverse opinions.

In the Asharite's school of thought, Islam means open compliance with the message of the Prophet (SAW). In other words, it connotes submission to the Commandments and the Prohibitions manifested in the utterance of the two formula of testimony i. e. (*Lā Ilāha iIlāllāhu, Muhammad Rasūlullah*). As for other deeds, like *Ṣalāt*, *Zakāt* and *Ṣiyām*, mere recognition of them by a *Mukallaf* when asked about them can be accepted as adequate compliance and submission.

The Maturidites and some Ash'arite authorities maintain that Islam is inner conviction. They based their view on the saying of Allah: "Is he whom Allah has expanded his bosom with Islam…" Thus verbal declaration is only a proof and deeds are only complimentary. The supporters of the first opinion however replied that the verse implies acceptance of Islam.

Islam and *Īmān* are both used as synonyms in the Qur'ān. Allah (SWT) says:

> We brought out from it those who were *Mū'min*s (believers), we found not there in except a house of the Muslims.
>
> My people, if you believe (have *Īmān*) in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you are Muslim.

> Do not die except as Muslim. And Whoever seeks a faith beside Al-Islam, it shall not be accepted from him.

Thus, both *Īmān* and Islam have been used to signify both apparent and inner submission while the religion as a whole is intended. They are also both used as antonyms. Allah says:-

> The Arabs says: "we believe (*Īmān*)", say (O Muhammad): "you do not believe but say we submit (Muslims) until the faith enters into your heart" and He says "It is they in whose hearts is faith".

In a *Ḥadīth*, the Prophet (SAW) was asked by Angel Jubril concerning faith: he replied: faith is to believe in Allah, his Angels, his books, his Messengers, the last day, the *Qadar* (predestination). Then the Prophet asked about Islam and he said: "Islam is the *shahādatain*, *Ṣalāt*, *Zakāt*, *Ṣiyām*, and *Ḥajj*".

On the other hand *Īmān* is used to imply inner conviction while Islam is used to imply outer submission. Also, both were used interchangeably i. e. that Islam signifies outer and inner submission while *Īmān* implies inner submission. The Prophet (SAW) was asked "which of the deeds is best?" He replied: Islam. Then he was asked: "Which Islam is the best? He answered: *Īmān* (faith). Therefore *Īmān* (faith) is in the heart, and it is the best of the deeds whether carried out by the tongue or through action by the parts of the body.

Both are also used in their linguistical connotations i.e. that *Īmān* means to be convinced with any thing, truth or false. Allah says: "And he who disbelieves in *Ṭāghūt* and believes in Allah…" and He says: "…Those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allah…"

And Islam is used to mean absolute submission. Allah says: "They say: "we worship your Lord and the Lord of your fathers Ibrahim, Ismael, Ishaq. The One Lord, in whom we all submit".

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

5. Find the extent of the relationship between the terms Islam and *Īmān***.** Give their legal implication from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

3.3.6: Increase and Decease of *Īmān*

The Muslim theologians are divided into three schools on whether *Īmān* increases and decreases;

1. From the Asharites point of view *Īmān* increases and decreases by increase and decrease in the observance of religious duties and obligations. They based their opinion on reason (ʿ*aql*) and revelation (*naql*). They argue that, for instance, *Īmān* of the Prophets, the Angels and the Rightly Guided Caliphs and *Īmān* of those addicts to transgression and sinners cannot be said to be equal; they vary in degree. And says: "Recitation of His signs to them make their *Īmān* to increase. It also says: "so that they may add faith to their faith" Q. 48:4); fear them, and it added to their faith; and "as for the believers, their faith was caused to increase and they received glad tidings.

   They also referred to the statement credited to the Prophet which read: The faith of Abubakr is greater than those of the *Ummah* altogether. And when Ibn Umar asked him (SAW): "Does *Īmān* increase or reduce? His answer was: "Yes, it increases until it enters the faithful Paradise; and it decreases until the person enters hell" (eventhough he will not be there perpetually.

   Thus it is evidenced in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* that Faith increases; and whatever can increase in degree can also reduce.

2. From the point of view of Abu Hanifah and many other theologians *Īmān* does not accept increase or decrease. They argue that since *Īmān* connotes faith based on certainty and submission its increase cannot be imagined because there exists no other grade over certainty. Its decrease cannot be imagined as well; because reduction in certainty becomes conjecture and doubt; and this will result in lack of *Īmān*.

   They maintained that "increase" in the verses on which other theologians based their views are relative to the issues in question in their contexts. Religious duties are revealed piecemeal on several occasions. The verses thus only described the attitudes of the Companions when they were receiving training in revelations brought to the Prophet. Increase in faith as used in the *Ḥadīth* thus connotes "deeds". For instance, "Allah will not waist your faith" in Q….." connotes *Ṣalāt* observed facing the Mosque of Jerusalem.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

6. Does *Īmān* increase and decrease?

3.4 Summary

According to the Ash'arites' majority and the Maturidites, *Īmān* implies convinction in the heart (*at-Taşdīq al-Qalbī*), submission, to be pleased and to accept the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S). In the School of Abu Hanifah and his supporters, both convinction in the heart and verbal declaration of the tongue are indivisible components of the reality of *Īmān*. The Kharijites, the Mu'tazilites, the Jurists and the Traditionists maintain that *Īmān* consists of three components, viz convinction, declaration and action. Islam and *Īmān* are sometimes interchangably used, but in reality, while Islam implies open submission to the commandments and prohibitions of God, *Īmān* implies inner conviction manifested in the utterance of the *shahādatayn*. In the opinion of the Asharites, *Īmān* increases by increase in the observance of religious duties and decreases by decrease in the observance of religious obligations. This Unit therefore opens with a detailed presentation of the concept of *Īmān* from the point of view of the Ash'arites' majority and the Maturidites providing the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* basis of the stand of the school. This is followed by the view-points of the Hanifites and its basis and those of the Kharijites, Mutazilites, the Jurists and the Traditionists.

Other related matters expatiated upon includes relationship between Islam and *Īmān* and their legal implications and whether *Īmān* accepts increase or decrease.

3.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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(3) Ghalwash, Ahmad A. (1963). *The Religion of Islam*, Cairo, Egypt.
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3.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises

Answer to SAE 1 (SAEs)

1. Three schools of Islamic theology have given divergent view-points on the concept of faith in Islam as follow: According to the Ash'arites' majority and the Maturidites, *Īmān* implies convinction in the heart (*a`t-Taşdīq al-Qalbī*), submission, to be pleased and to accept the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (S). Conviction in this regard without submission is not *Īmān*.

Thus, whoever knows the mission of the Prophet Muhammad but refuses to submit to it is an infidel. Allah (SWT) says: "They know him as they know their children but a group of them conceals the truth knowingly. Belief in the unity of God, Apostles and Angels, Obligation of observance of *Ṣalāt* and prohibition of adultery are examples of the Prophet's mission.

Answer to SAE 2 (SAEs)
2. The Divine words which say: "It is they who have faith inscribed in their hearts". "….And his heart is at peace with faith". "And when faith enters into your heart". The Holy Prophet (SAW) says: "O Lord make firm my heart on the religion". All these are evidence that the place of faith is the heart. In other words, faith is in the heart while actions are performed by the parts of the body.

Answer to SAE 3 (SAEs)
3. Abu Hanifa and the followers believe that *Īmān* is a name given to actions of the heart and the tongue. In other words, verbal attestation of faith is a part of reality of *Īmān*. While Ash'arites believe that *Īmān* has to do with the heart and action of the body and utterance with tongue to some extent. Abu Hanifah and his supporters buttressed their view with the prophetic saying: "I have been commanded to fight people until they utter *Lā ilāha illāllāh*." And he who utters *Lā ilāha illāllāh* has himself and his wealth protected except with right and his judgement is left with Allah".

Answer to SAE 4 (SAEs)
4. The Kharijites, Mutazilites, and some Jurists and Traditionists give the concept of *Īmān* as accompanying conviction of the heart and proclamation of the *Shahādatain* (Lā *Illāha iIlāllāhu Muhammad Rasūlullah)* with action.

- The Kharijites however maintained that conviction, proclamation and action constitute three parts of faith; and that they are of the same category. Whoever lacks any of the three parts should be considered a *kāfir*.
- As for the Mutazilites, they maintained that absence of conviction of the heart and proclamation in words renders one *kāfir* while lack of action puts one in between *Īmān* and *kufr* (i.e. *manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). He is called by them a *fāsiq* who will be perpetual in hell fire.
- The Jurist and the Traditionalists are of the opinion that all these divisions/parts (action, speech and thought) are not of the same category. He who lacks conviction in his heart (*taṣdīq*) lacks faith which will result to Salvation in the hereafter. Lack of *Īmān* on which

mundane judgements are based follows lack of declaration (*Iqrār*). And where action is lacking perfect faith lacks. They supported their views with the Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet (SAW).

Answer to SAE 5 (SAEs)

5. The discussion on the relationship between Islam and *Iman* goes thus: the word "Islam" is only to explain its linguistic and legal significance and its relationship with *Īmān*. Linguistically, Islam means submission openly and secretly. On its legal implication there are diverse opinions.

- In the Asharite's school of thought, Islam means open compliance with the message of the Prophet (SAW). In other words, it connotes submission to the Commandments and the Prohibitions manifested in the utterance of the two formula of testimony i. e. (*Lā Ilāha iIlāllāhu, Muhammad Rasūlullah*). As for other deeds, like *Ṣalāt, Zakāt* and *Ṣiyām,* mere recognition of them by a *Mukallaf* when asked about them can be accepted as adequate compliance and submission.
- The Maturidites and some Ash'arite authorities maintain that Islam is inner conviction. They based their view on the saying of Allah: "Is he whom Allah has expanded his bosom with Islam…" Thus verbal declaration is only a proof and deeds are only complimentary. The supporters of the first opinion however replied that the verse implies acceptance of Islam. Islam and *Īmān* are both used as synonyms in the Qur'ān. Allah (SWT) says:

  > We brought out from it those who were *Mū'min*s (believers), we found not there in except a house of the Muslims.
  >
  > My people, if you believe (have *Īmān*) in Allah, then put your trust in Him if you are Muslim.
  >
  > Do not die except as Muslim. And Whoever seeks a faith beside Al-Islam, it shall not be accepted from him.

- In a *Ḥadīth*, the Prophet (SAW) was asked by Angel Jubril concerning faith: he replied: faith is to believe in Allah, his Angels, his books, his Messengers, the last day, the *Qadar* (predestination). Then the Prophet asked about Islam and he said: "Islam is the *shahādatain, Ṣalāt, Zakāt, Ṣiyām,* and *Ḥajj*".

Answer to SAE 6 (SAEs)

6. The Muslim theologians are divided into three schools on whether *Īmān* increases and decreases;

- From the Asharites point of view *Īmān* increases and decreases by increase and decrease in the observance of religious duties and obligations. They based their opinion on reason (ʿ*aql*) and revelation (*naql*). When Ibn Umar asked him (SAW): "Does *Īmān* increase or reduce? His answer was: "Yes, it increases until it enters the faithful Paradise; and it decreases until the person enters hell" (eventhough he will not be there perpetually.
- From the point of view of Abu Hanifah and many other theologians *Īmān* does not accept increase or decrease. They argue that since *Īmān* connotes faith based on certainty and submission its increase cannot be imagined because there exists no other grade over certainty. They maintained that "increase" in the verses on which other theologians based their views are relative to the issues in question in their contexts.

Unit 4: *An-Nubuwwah* (Propethood) and *Ar-Risālah*

CONTENTS

4.1: Introduction
4.2: Learning Outcomes
4.3: Background to *An-Nubuwwah* (Propethood) and *Ar-Risālah*
4.3.1: The three categories to which Articles of faith in Islam are usually classified
4.3.2: The Significance of Belief in Apostles of God and His Messengers
4.3.3: Significance of the Terms *Nabiyy* and *Rasūl*
4.3.4: Necessary, Impossible and Possible Qualities of the Messengers.
4.3.5: Miracles
4.4: Summary
4.5: References/Further Readings
4.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

4.1: INTRODUCTION

You will agree with me that a divine religion is as a matter of necessity brought to humanity through God's Messengers and Prophets. In this Unit you will be presented with an elaboration of this important aspect of theology. Since this is a pertinent point to introduce you to the three categories which the understanding of articles of faith in Islam are usually classified let us clarify that first before we proceed further.

4.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the three categories to which the articles of faith are usually classified and apply it to the concept of prophethood and apostle-ship in Islam.
- Give account of the significance of belief in the Apostles of God and His Messengers
- Explain the terms *Nabiyy* and *Rasūl*
- Identify the necessary, impossible and possible qualities of the Messengers
- Highlight the significance of miracles in the mission of the Messengers of God.

4.3: Background to *An-Nubuwwah* (Propethood) and *Ar-Risālah*

4.3.1: The three categories to which Articles of faith in Islam are usually classified.

The understanding of the articles of faith is usually classified into the following three categories; the *wājib* (necessary), the *mustaḥīl* (impossible) and the *jā'iz* (possible).

1. The ***wājib*** **(necessary)** is that the non–existence of which cannot be apprehended by the intellect (*'aql*) that is, the intellect cannot affirm its non–existence, as boundary to a body (*jirm*), i.e. its taking up a certain measure of space (*farāgh*). An example of a body is a tree or a stone. Then, whenever a person says to you that a tree, for example, does not take up root (*maḥāl*) in the earth, your intellect cannot affirm that, for its taking up root is necessary thing, the absence of which your intellect cannot affirm.

2. The ***mustaḥīl*** **(impossible)** is that the existence of which the intellect cannot affirm; then, whenever anyone says that such a body is bare of motion and rest at the same time, your intellect cannot affirm that, because being bare of motion and rest at the same time is an impossibility, the occurrence and the existence of which the intellect cannot affirm, and whenever it is said that weakness (*'ajz*) is impossible in God, the meaning is that the occurrence or existence of weakness in God is unthinkable; so, too, with the other impossibilities.

3. And the ***jāi'z*** **(possible)** is that the existence of which at one time, and the non – existence at another, the intellect can affirm, as the existence of a child for Zayd's. When , then, someone says that Zayd has a child, your intellect acknowledges the possibility of the truth of that; and whenever he says that Zayd has no child, your intellect acknowledges the possibility of the truth of that. So the existence and the non – existence of a child of Zayd are possible; the intellect can believe in its existence or in its non- existence. And whenever it is said that God's sustaining Zayd with a dinar is a possibility, the meaning is that the intellect assents to the existence of that sustaining (*rizq*) at one time and to its non–existence at another.

On these three distinctions, then, is based the articles of belief; and these three are necessary for every *mukallaf* [one who has a task imposed upon him; in this case of religious duty, male and female, for that upon which the necessary is based is necessary].

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Identify, with brief explanation, the three distinctions on which the articles of belief in Islam are based.

4.3.2: The Significance of Belief in Aposles of God and His Messengers

Belief in Apostles of God and His Messengers is a principal article of faith in Islam. Thus every *Mukallaf* must believe that Allah sent Messengers to humanity from among them, giving good tidings of His reward and warning of His punishment. This is inclusive in Q.2:285, one of the passages that enumerate the Islamic articles of faith. Whoever denies it is considered an infidel.

The Sunnis maintain that the sending of Apostles belongs to the category of that which is possible in God. He sent them out of the mercy and grace He has for His servants because of its benefits for them and not by way of necessity.

The Mutazillah, on the other hand, considered sending of Apostles as incumbent on God. This is based on their principle of *ṣalāḥ wal-aṣlaḥ* which means justice demands that God ensures what is salutary to humanity here on earth and in the hereafter. You will however see that this contradicts the principle that Allah does what He wills and no compulsion on Him whatsoever.

It is also incumbent to believe in the truthfulness of the mission of the Prophets, take them as role model and comply with their teachings. It is also incumbent to believe in the books sent to them as revelation from God; and that they generally were provided with divine protection and miracles to support their mission.

Although their number is unknown because Q.40:78 says: "We narrated the story of some of them to you and We did not narrate the story of some of them". It is incumbent to believe specifically in twenty five of them who are mentioned in *Qur'ān.* The meaning of Chapter 6: verse 82 reads:

> That was the reasoning about Us which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree; for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him We guided Noah and among his

progeny, David, Solomon, Job Joseph, Moses and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good; And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: And Ismail and Elisha and Jonas and Lot: and to all We gave favor above the nations.

Others to be included in this belief are Idris, Hud, Shuayb, Ṣālih, Dhu `l-Kifl, Adam and Muhammad. It is also compulsory to believe generally in the revealed books and particularly those mentioned in the Qur'ān i.e. Zabur, Taorat, Injil, and the Qur'ān. And it is necessary to confess that the most excellent of created beings, absolutely, is our Prophet Muhammad; and there follow him in excellence the rest of the Endowed with Earnestness and Patience (*ulūl-ʿazm*; see Qur. 46: 34); they are Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, and Nuh. The correct view is that they are five along with our Prophet and four after him. They are so called because they exercised patience and endured persecution of their people and more hardship than others. And it is said too, that the Endowed with Earnestness and Patience are more numerous. And there follow them in excellence the rest of the Apostles, then, the rest of the Prophets, then the Angels.

And it is necessary to confess that God has aided them with miracles (*muʿjizāt*) and that He has distinguished our Prophet in that he is the seal of the Apostles, and that his law (*Sharīʿah*) will not be abrogated till time is fulfilled. And Isa, after his descent, will judge according to the law of our Prophet. It is said that he will take it from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* (*al-Fuḍalī*).

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. How many Messengers did Allah raise for humanity as mentioned in the Qur'an?
3. Mention the names of some of them.

4.3.3 Significance of the Terms *Nabiyy* and *Rasūl*

A *Nabiyy* (Prophet) is one to whom law is revealed whether commanded to deliver the law or not while a Rasūl (Messenger or Apostle) is one to whom law is revealed and commanded to deliver it. *Rasūl* is therefore wider in sense than *Nabiyy*. In other words, every *Rasūl* is a *Nabiyy* while not every *Nabiyy* is a *Rasūl*.

In another opinion, the two imply the same meaning and have been defined as One sent by God to deliver the message revealed to him. The first definition is however the most acceptable. Allah says: "*Rasūl* and *Nabiyy* were sent before you". Further when the Prophet (S) was asked about the number of the *Anbiyā'*, he replied 124,000; then he was asked: How many of them were *Rusul*? He replied 313".

Thus *Rasūl* is One who received law and was commanded to deliver it while *Nabiyy* was One who received law but not commanded to deliver it. In other words, *Rasūl* received a new book containing new divine law or abrogating part of law existing before it while a *Nabiyy* only supports law of his predecessor. Revelation to a *Rasūl* is usually through Angel Jibril while revelation to a *Nabiyy* could be through a voice or a vision. They were all men, best in intelligent and morals among their people, wisest and best in opinion, safe from blemishes of paternal and maternal lineage, harshness and scaring defects and immoralities.

Are *Risālah* (Apostolate) and *Nubuwwah* (Prophet-hood) divine gift or through acquisition? It is maintained in Islam that *Risālah* and *Nubuwwah* are gifts from God. He grants them to whom He pleases among His servants. They are His special grace to the chosen ones among His creatures. He chooses for His mercy that He wishes and He knows best whom He should saddle with His message. *Risālah* is hence to choose a servant of God for receiving divine revelation and be instructed to deliver it. *Nubuwwah* is to choose a servant of God for receiving divine revelation whether with or without instruction to deliver it. Saint-hood could however be through acquisition or divine gift.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

4. Differentiate between the two terms *Nabiyy* and *Rasūl***.**
5. Are the two acquireable?

4.3.4 Necessary, Impossible and Possible Qualities of the Messengers.

The Messengers are emissaries between God and His creatures delivering His commandments and prohibitions; and promises and threats; and teaching the things that are hidden to them and which they need such as the principles of occupations and different kinds of worship and attributes of the Creator, the Amighty and matters relating to the heavens and heavenly bodies.

It is thus necessary that they should have qualities that will guarantee the objective of their mission. Thus all human perfect qualities are necessary for them. This includes veracity in all their sayings (*Şidq*), infallibility (*'işmah*), that

is, their being preserved from falling into *muḥarram* or *makrūh* (things forbidden or disliked) and (*amānah*) Trustworthiness.

Others are qualities of *tablīgh* (conveying to the creatures what they were commanded to convey); and *faṭānah* (intelligence). These four things are necessary qualities of Apostles in the sense that the lack of them is unthinkable.

The opposites of these four are impossible in the Apostles, that is, lying (*kidhb*), unfaithfulness (*khiyānah*), in a thing forbidden or disliked, concealment (*kitmān*) of a thing they have been commanded to convey, and Stupidity (*balādah*). These four are impossible in them, in the sense that the existence of them is unthinkable.

The last of the articles relating to them is the possibility of the occurrence of such human conditions in them as do not lead to defect in their lofty rank. And the proof of existence of veracity in them is that if they were to lie, then information from God would be a lie, for He has guaranteed the claim of the Apostles by the manifestation of miracles at their hands. For the miracle is revealed in place of an utterance from God, "My servant is truthful in all that he brings from Me" (al-Fuḍalī).

And as for the proof of Trustworthiness, that is, their being preserved internally and externally from forbidden and disliked things, if they were unfaithful in committing such things, we would be commanded to do the like. But it is impossible that we would be commanded to do a forbidden or disliked thing, "For God does not command a vile thing" (Q7: 27),

And as for the proof of Intelligence, if it were failing in them, how would they be able to establish an argument against an opponent? But the Qur'ān indicates in more than one place, that they must establish arguments against adversaries. And such establishing of arguments is only possible with intelligence.

And the proof that they can fall into human accidental conditions is that contained in reports about their lofty rank; and that occurrence of illness in them for example, is for the sake of increase in their lofty rank, and that others may be consoled, and that the thoughtful may know that the world is not a place of recompense for the lovers of God; since if it were, why should something of the vexations of the world befall the apostles?

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

6. Enumerate the Necessary, Impossible and Possible Qualities of the Messengers with proofs.

4.3.5 Miracles

Miracles are abnormal matters or events occurring from a Prophet when challenged by opponents of his mission a like of which the opponents will be unable to produce. It is called *Mu'jizah* in the Islamic theology.

Mu'jizah belongs to the category of possible qualities. The inimitability of the Qur'ān and stories of miracles of Prophets are proofs of possibility of miracles. It is a manifest of power of God to bring things about in an extra-ordinary manner and out of natural rule or through a special means which may be beyond our comprehension. But its impact will occur from the hands of a Prophet.

The proof of verity of divine message by *Mu'jizah* is incontrovertible in the opinion of the majority of theologians whether such *Mu'jizah* occurred during or before the time of the Prophet. Men who were with the Prophets witnessed them with certainty. So also are reports about them, generations after generations.

Miracles of Prophet Muhammad: Allah (SWT) supported Prophet Muhammad (Ş) with several miracles. Report of some, like the Qur'ān, reached us in succession. There is unanimity about others the details of which differs among groups and individuals, such as reports of pebbles uttering glory of God in his hands, stones and trees that greeted him and water that flew from his glorious fingers.

Whoever denies the inimitability and miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and reports of miracles in the holy book is regarded a *kāfir* against whom deterrent measures may be taken. On the other hands denial of other extra-ordinary occurrences will only make a person intransigent.

Meanwhile, Qur'ān is the greatest of all the miracles. It is the living miracle. Its inimitability remains a challenge that will never be faulted. *Sharī'ah* rules and rational sciences were derived from it. It contains reports of past peoples and nations. It is divinely protected from interpolation and alteration. It challenged the eloquent poets and orators and they failed to produce a kind of it. They thus resorted to taking of arms and sheding of blood. It thus became evidence of the Prophet's mission and the ultimate miracle.

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

7. Give an Islamic stand on the concept of miracle.

4.4 Summary

This Unit opens with an explanation of the three categories to which articles of faith in Islam are classified. It expatiates the significance of the creed and highlights the divergent views of the theological schools. It gives an idea about the number and names of some of them buttressed with references to sacred texts of Islam. The distinction between a Prophet and an Apostle and the question of whether they were through divine grace or acquisition are clarified. A discussion of the *wājib* (necessary), *mustaḥīl* (impossible) and *jā'iz* (possible) qualities in them is also included. The Unit is concluded with a brief examination of the concept of miracle.

The articles of belief in Islam are based on three distinctions, viz : *wājib* (the necessary) *jā'iz* (the possible) and *mustaḥīl* (the impossible). All schools of Islamic theology maintain that belief in Prophet of God and His Messengers is a principal article of faith in Islam. The Sunnis however hold the view that sending of Apostles to man by God belonged to the categories of possible things (i.e. out of His mercy, not as a matter of necessity). The *Mu'tazilah*, considered it *wājib* (i.e. necessary) based on their principle that justice demands that God ensures what is salutary to humanity. The most acceptable opinion is that a *Nabiyy* (Prophet) is one to whom law is revealed whether commanded to deliver the law or not while a *Rasūl* (Messenger or Apostle) is one to whom law is revealed and commanded to deliver it. God honours with both whom He chooses; they are not acquired; it is only saint-hood that is acquireable.

Qualities of Veracity, Infallibility, Trustworthiness, Intelligence are qualities necessary in them (*wājib*). The opposites of these, viz. Lying, Betrayal of trust, Concealment of message and Stupidity are impossible qualities in hem (*mustaḥīl*). Occurrence of such human accidents in them as do not lead to defect in their lofty rank is possible (*jā'iz*). The proof of verity of divine message by *Mu'jizah* is incontrovertible in the opinion of the majority of theologians. Whereas whoever denies the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān and reports of miracles in the holy book is a *kāfir*, denial of other extra-ordinary occurrences reported from Prohet Muhammad will only make a person intransigent.

4.5 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.

(2) Muhammad al-Fuḍalī, *Kiṭāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalam,* Eng. trans. by D. B. MacDonald in his Development of Muslim Theology…London, 1903, pp. 315-351

(3) Najmu 'd-Dīn an-`Nasafī,, *al-Aqā'id*, Eng. tr. by D.B. MacDonald…pp. 308-315

(4) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo,
Al-Azhar Colleges Press.

4.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answers to SAEs 1

1. The understanding of the articles of faith is usually classified into the following three categories; the *wājib* (necessary), the *mustaḥīl* (impossible) and the *jā'iz* (possible).

1. The ***wājib* (necessary)** is that the non–existence of which cannot be apprehended by the intellect (*'aql*) that is, the intellect cannot affirm its non–existence, as boundary to a body (*jirm*), i.e. its taking up a certain measure of space (*farāgh*).
2. The ***mustaḥīl* (impossible)** is that the existence of which the intellect cannot affirm; then, whenever anyone says that such a body is bare of motion and rest at the same time, your intellect cannot affirm that, because being bare of motion and rest at the same time is an impossibility, the occurrence and the existence of which the intellect cannot affirm, and whenever it is said that weakness (*'ajz*) is impossible in God, the meaning is that the occurrence or existence of weakness in God is unthinkable; so, too, with the other impossibilities.

3. And the ***jāi'z* (possible)** is that the existence of which at one time, and the non – existence at another, the intellect can affirm, as the existence of a child for Zayd's. When, then, someone says that Zayd has a child, your intellect acknowledges the possibility of the truth of that; and whenever he says that Zayd has no child, your intellect acknowledges the possibility of the truth of that. So the existence and the non – existence of a child of Zayd are possible; the intellect can believe in its existence or in its non- existence. And whenever it is said that God's sustaining Zayd with a dinar is a possibility, the meaning is that the intellect assents to the existence of that sustaining (*rizq*) at one time and to its non–existence at another.

On these three distinctions, then, is based the articles of belief; and these three are necessary for every *mukallaf* [one who has a task imposed upon him; in this case of religious duty, male and female, for that upon which the necessary is based is necessary].

Answers to SAEs 2

2. Belief in Apostles of God and His Messengers is a principal article of faith in Islam in which every *Mukallaf* must believe that Allah sent Messengers to

humanity from among them, giving good tidings of His reward and warning of His punishment. This is inclusive in Q.2:285, one of the passages that enumerate the Islamic articles of faith. Whoever denies it is considered an infidel.

3. Although their number is unknown because Q.40:78 says: "We narrated the story of some of them to you and We did not narrate the story of some of them". It is incumbent to believe specifically in twenty five of them who are mentioned in *Qur'ān* Chapter 6: verse 82 as follow:

> That was the reasoning about Us which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree; for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) We guided: and before him We guided Noah and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job Joseph, Moses and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good; And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: And Ismail and Elisha and Jonas and Lot: and to all We gave favor above the nations.

Answers to SAEs 3

4. A *Nabiyy* (Prophet) is one to whom law is revealed whether commanded to deliver the law or not while a Rasūl (Messenger or Apostle) is one to whom law is revealed and commanded to deliver it. *Rasūl* is therefore wider in sense than *Nabiyy*. In other words, every *Rasūl* is a *Nabiyy* while not every *Nabiyy* is a *Rasūl*.

In other words, *Rasūl* received a new book containing new divine law or abrogating part of law existing before it while a *Nabiyy* only supports law of his predecessor. Revelation to a *Rasūl* is usually through Angel Jibril while revelation to a *Nabiyy* could be through a voice or a vision.

Answers to SAEs 4

5. The two are acquirable as in the case of the Prophet Muhammad and some others.

Answers to SAEs 4

6. Necessary Qualities of the Messengers: It is necessary that the Messengers of Allah should have qualities that will guarantee the objective of their mission. Thus the following are necessary for them; veracity in all their

sayings (*Ṣidq*), infallibility (*'iṣmah*), that is, their being preserved from falling into *muḥarram* or *makrūh* (things forbidden or disliked) and (*amānah*) Trustworthiness, qualities of *tablīgh* (conveying to the creatures what they were commanded to convey); and *faṭānah* (intelligence). These four things are necessary qualities of Apostles in the sense that the lack of them is unthinkable.

Impossible Qualities of the Messengers: The opposites of these four are impossible in the Apostles, that is, lying (*kidhb*), unfaithfulness (*khiyānah*), in a thing forbidden or disliked, concealment (*kitmān*) of a thing they have been commanded to convey, and Stupidity (*balādah*). These four are impossible in them, in the sense that the existence of them is unthinkable.

Possible Qualities of the Messengers: The last of the articles relating to them is the possibility of the occurrence of such human conditions in them as do not lead to defect in their lofty rank. And the proof of existence of veracity in them is that if they were to lie, then information from God would be a lie, for He has guaranteed the claim of the Apostles by the manifestation of miracles at their hands. For the miracle is revealed in place of an utterance from God, "My servant is truthful in all that he brings from Me" (al-Fuḍalī).

Proofs: And as for the proof of Trustworthiness, that is, their being preserved internally and externally from forbidden and disliked things, if they were unfaithful in committing such things, we would be commanded to do the like. But it is impossible that we would be commanded to do a forbidden or disliked thing, "For God does not command a vile thing" (Q7: 27),

And as for the proof of Intelligence, if it were failing in them, how would they be able to establish an argument against an opponent? But the Qur'ān indicates in more than one place, that they must establish arguments against adversaries. And such establishing of arguments is only possible with intelligence.

And the proof that they can fall into human accidental conditions is that contained in reports about their lofty rank; and that occurrence of illness in them for example, is for the sake of increase in their lofty rank, and that others may be consoled, and that the thoughtful may know that the world is not a place of recompense for the lovers of God; since if it were, why should something of the vexations of the world befall the apostles?

Answers to SAEs 5

7. Miracles are abnormal matters or events occurring from a Prophet when challenged by opponents of his mission a like of which the opponents will be unable to produce. It is called *Mu'jizah* in the Islamic theology.

Mu'jizah belongs to the category of possible qualities. The inimitability of the Qur'ān and stories of miracles of Prophets are proofs of possibility of miracles. It is a manifest of power of God to bring things about in an extra-ordinary manner and out of natural rule or through a special means which may be beyond our comprehension. But its impact will occur from the hands of a Prophet.

The proof of verity of divine message by *Mu'jizah* is incontrovertible in the opinion of the majority of theologians whether such *Mu'jizah* occurred during or before the time of the Prophet. Men who were with the Prophets witnessed them with certainty. So also are reports about them, generations after generations.

MODULE 2: Development of Muslim *Firaq*

Unit 1: The Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and the Conseqquences of Grave Sin.

Unit 2: The Khawārij

Unit 3: The *Shī'ah*

Unit 4: Extremist Shī'ites (*Ghulātu sh-Shī'ah*)

Unit 1 The Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and Consequences of Grave Sin.

CONTENTS

1.1: Introduction
1.2: Learning Outcomes
1.3: Background to the Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and Consequences of Grave Sin.
1.3.1: The Jabarites,
1.3.2: The Qadarites
1.3.3: The Muslim Majority's Opinion
1.3.4: Consequences of Grave sin
1.4: Summary
1.5: References/Further Readings
1.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

1.1: INTRODUCTION

As you should have expected, there were people who usually engaged in religious pursuits and discussions as early as the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The *Ahlul-Ṣuffah* (People of the Platform i.e. in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina) could be cited as example. This group generally did discuss religious matters applying reason where needed. It may not be out of place to mention Ali, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Aishah, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal along with them. Perhaps the report that the Prophet Muhammad (Ş) once met some Companions arguing on the issue of *Qadar* and discouraged them refers to them. In this unit, three early theological movements associated with discussion on predestination shall be presented to you.

1.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. identify the Jabarites and highlight their views on predestination
2. identify the Qadarites and highlight their views on predestination
3. highlight the Muslim Majority's opinion on predestination
4. enumerate what are regarded as grave sin and its consequences.

1.3: The Jabarites, the Qadarites, the Murjites and Consequences of Grave Sin.

1.3.1: The *Jabariyyah* (Jabarites)

In the pre-Mutazilite era, before 105 A.H./732 A.D., certain Muslims held the belief that what man will be or do on earth has been predetermined by God. So, no matter how pious or impious he was on earth, the decree of God on him would prevail. In fact, his uprightness or otherwise was regarded as manifestation of God's will. That somebody was a saint or a sinner was therefore not his own making but what God wanted him to be.

To such people, man is so weak that he cannot take any action independently. He is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of God Who manipulates him the way He likes. People of such belief often supported their stand with quotations from both Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. An instance of such quotation is Qur'ān chapter 35 verse 8, which says 'verily God leads astray whom He pleases and guides to the right path whom He pleases'; and Chapter 10 verse 26, which says ' God calls to the abode of peace and guides whom He wills into the right path'; and Chapter 42 verse 14 which also asserts that 'God elects for Himself whom He pleases and guides unto Himself who turns to repentance.

An example of quotations from the prophetic traditions (*Ḥadīth*) is the one which says 'what hits you could not possibly have missed you and what misses you could not probably have hit you, the pens have been raised and the papers are dry'. Another *Ḥadīth* stipulates that 'a man during the process of his growth in the womb gets his life span and where he would be after death by the decree of God ever before he was born'.

Since God creates man, since God directs his actions, he has no choice but to behave according to what has been predestined for him. The people who believed in pre-destination are known as the Jabarites.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Who were the Jabarites? Provide some Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* passages they cite to support their views.

1.3.2 The *Qadariyyah* (Qadarites)

The opponents of the predestination argued that certainly, God does not do evil and does not condone evil practices. That is why He punishes evildoers and rewards righteous people. God does not create anybody to be rich or to be poor; success or failure, wealth or poverty are results of each man's advantages and initiatives. God does not create anyone to do evils. If He were to do this, it would be injustice on His part to turn round and punish evildoers. Furthermore, God does not guide certain people aright and lead others astray. If He were to do this, it would amount to arbitrariness and partiality on His part.
Thus the opponents asserted that man has his own volition, independence and free will to do what he likes and be rewarded accordingly, good or bad, depending solely on his choice and freewill. Because of the emphasis they laid on freewill of the people thus negating the control of God on man, the opponents of predestination were called Qadarites.

Surprisingly, the opponents of predestination used the word Qadarites for the upholders of predestination. The Qadarites refused being called this epithet because the Prophet once said that the Qadarites are enemies of God.

According to the promoters of free will, God has given man the faculty to reason and differentiate between what is good and what is bad. Besides that, 104 holy books have explained elaborately what is good and what is bad. Furthermore, that was the purpose of sending 124000 Prophets like Ibrahim, Musa, Dawud and Isa to different peoples and nations at different times; and also that was why Prophet Muhammad was sent as the last of the Prophets. They go further to say that that is why the Qur'ān asserts that everybody will be responsible for his own deeds. Qur'ān 17 verse 15 says: 'he who receives guidance receives it for his own benefit and he who goes astray does it at his own risk. No bearer of burden will bear the burden of another nor would we give out punishment to any group of people until we have sent an apostle to give warning'.

To argue further that God does not predestine anybody to do evil, promoters of free will, the *Qadariyyah* quotes *Qur'ān* chapter 41 verse 46 which says ' whoever is righteous benefits his own soul and whoever does evil does it against his own soul. Your Lord is never unjust to His servants'. They also point to Qur'ān chapter 76 verse 3, which says: 'God has certainly shown man the way, it's for him to accept or reject'. They therefore reject the arguments put forward by their opponents and assert that anything contrary to their view is misinterpretation.

The pre-determinists who were surprisingly supported by the majority of the Muslims rejected the argument of free-will group saying that the latter were dualists who had set up the human being as a co-creator with God by believing that human beings can initiate their own actions and thereby determine their own fate. Some of the protagonists were; Ma'bad al Juhani, a citizen of Basra who was killed in 699 AD. Another was Ghaylan ibn Abd al Malik al-Dimashqi who was killed in about 743 AD. So also was Shabib al Najrani, who was killed almost during the same period.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Who were the Qadarites?
3. Provide some Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* passages they quoted in support of their views.

1.3.3: The Muslim Majority's Opinion

From the *Sunni* point of view, it is incumbent upon every *Mukallaf* (one on whose religious duty is imposed) to believe that it is possible for God to create good and evil; to create Islam in Zayd and unbelief in 'Amr, knowledge in one of them and ignorance in the other.

It is also incumbent upon every *Mukallaf*, to believe that the good and the bad of things are by act of Destiny (*qaḍā*') and act of Decree (*qadar*). And there is a difference of opinion as to their meaning. It is said that Destiny (*qaḍā*') is the will of God and the eternal connection of that will (*azalī*), and Decree (*qadar*) is God's bringing into existence the thing in agreement with the will. So the Will of God that is connected eternally with your becoming a learned man or a Sultan is destiny, and the bringing of knowledge into existence in you, after your existence, or the Sultanship in agreement with the Will, is decree. And it is said that Destiny is God's eternal knowledge and its connection with the thing known, and Decree is bringing things into a man after he enters existence.

Furthermore to the Sunnis, this belief belongs to the category of things the doing of which is only possible for God. By this, they assert that there is nothing incumbent upon God. He creates faith in Zayd, for example, and gives him knowledge out of His grace without there being any necessity upon Him. Hence the saying: **كل نـعمة منه فضل، وكل نـقمة مـنه عدل (**God's rewarding the obedient is a grace from Him, and His punishing the rebellious is justice by Him). Obedience does not advantage Him nor does rebellion injure Him. And these acts of obedience or rebellion are only signs of God's rewarding or punishing those described by them. The ones whom He wills to draw near to Himself, He helps to obedience, and in Him who's abandoning and rejecting He wills, He creates

rebellion. And all acts of good and bad are by the creation of God, for He creates the creature and that which the creature does as He has said (Q37: 9): "and God has created you and that which ye do". (al-Fudali).

And the proof that possible things are possible in the case of God is that there is a general agreement on their possibility. If the doing of any possible thing was incumbent upon God, the possible would be turned into a necessary thing, if they were hindered from Him, the possible would be turned into an impossible. But the turning of the possible attribute into a necessary or an impossible one is false.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

4. Give and expatiate on the Islamic theological aphorism which summarizes *Sunni* stand on man's actions and fortune.

1.3.4: The Murjites and Consequences of Grave sin

Out of the discussion of the nature of the Islamic community and fate of its members in the hereafter, another theological sect called the Murjites emerged. Their theological view was that whether a man will enter hell or Paradise could not be settled in this world. It should therefore be postponed to the Day of Judgment when God will decide everybody's fate. For postponing such a decision, the group earned their name Murjites.

They argued that the worldliness of the Ummayah caliphs and their lukewarm attitude towards Islam as compared with the orthodox caliphs were not sufficient for anyone to refuse them recognition as leaders of Islamic community. The question of whether they are religiously qualified to rule the Islamic empire and whether the majority of the citizens were sinners who should be ostracized (banished or shut out from society) should be left in the hands of God.

This is not to say that criminals should not be punished but the fate of individual citizens who are considered sinners should be left to God, the Supreme authority. They often quoted Qur'ān chapter 4 verse 48 and chapter 4 verse 116 which say that God will not forgive the association of anything with Himself, and that apart from that He could forgive any other form of sins. The Murjites therefore consider as Muslims anyone who did not oppose the Unity of God and denounce Muhammad as His final messenger. This theological belief of leaving the matters of sinners in the hands of God puts the Murjites in a separate arm from the Kharijites who held the view that a grave sinner should be killed as you will see later.

In sum, grave sins are: the association of partners with God (*shirk*), deliberate killing of human beings without any justification (*qatlu nafs min ghayr ḥaqq*), adultery (*zinā*) and wrong accusation of a married woman of adultery (*qadhful-muḥṣanāt*), apostasy (*riddah*), running away from *Jihād* (*firār min al-Jihād*), magic (*siḥr*), unlawful misappropriation of the wealth of the orphans (*aklu māl al-yatīm*), persistence in unlawful things (*işrār alā dhamb*) etc, etc.

The Murjites were not only tolerant to sinners but also hesitant to declare anyone a good or bad Muslim simply because he committed sins. Their argument is that anyone who believes in One God and professes the *Kalmat al-Shahādah* i.e. formula by which a person attests to the unity of God – could not be easily declared a non-Muslim simply because he committed a sin.

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

5. Enumerate sins that are considered grave in Islam; then discuss the attitude of the Murjiites towards grave-sinners.

1.4: Summary

This unit suggests that the *Ahlul-Ṣuffah* usually engaged in theological pursuits during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Where needed, they tried to work out religious doctrines in the light of reason. The *Jabariyyah* and *Qadariyyah* were two other groups that argued the problem of pre- destination and free-will before 105 A.H./732 C. E. using reason and supporting their views with passages from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* thus constituting another nucleus of Islamic theological movements during te Prophet's life-time.

In the opinion of the (*Ahlus-Sunnah*) the Muslim Majority, it is incumbent upon every *Mukallaf*, to believe that the good and the bad of things are by act of Destiny (*qaḍā'*) and act of Decree (*qadar*). To them also **(كل نـعمة منه فضل، وكل نـقمة مـنه عـدل** God's rewarding the obedient is a grace from Him, and His punishing the rebellious is justice by Him). Another pre-Mutazilite era theological sect was the Murjites. Their theological view was that whether a man will enter hell or Paradise could not be settled in this world. It should therefore be postponed to the Day of Judgment when God will decide everybody's fate.

1.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Muhammad al-Fuđalī, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalam,* Eng. trans. by D. B. MacDonald in his Development of Muslim Theology…London, 1903, pp. 315-351.
(3) A. J. Wensick (1932). *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, Cambridge University Press.
(4) M. Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in MuslimPhilosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar Lahore.
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1.6 Possible Answers to Self Asessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answers to SAEs 1

1. Jabarites are those Muslims who hold the belief that since God creates man, since God directs his actions, he has no choice but to behave according to what has been predestined for him. So, no matter how pious or impious he was on earth, the decree of God on him would prevail. They believe that man is so weak that he cannot take any action independently. He is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of God Who manipulates him the way He likes.

   They often supported their stand with quotations from both Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. An instance of such quotation is Qur'ān chapter 35 verse 8, which says 'verily God leads astray whom He pleases and guides to the right path whom He pleases'; and Chapter 10 verse 26, which says ' God calls to the abode of peace and guides whom He wills into the right path'; and Chapter 42 verse 14 which also asserts that 'God elects for Himself whom He pleases and guides unto Himself who turns to repentance.

   An example of quotations from the prophetic traditions (*Ḥadīth*) is the one which says 'what hits you could not possibly have missed you and what misses you could not probably have hit you, the pens have been raised and the papers are dry'. Another *Ḥadīth* stipulates that 'a man during the process of his growth in the womb gets his life span and where he would be after death by the decree of God ever before he was born'.

Answers to SAEs 2

2. Qadarites are oppositions of Jabarites or opponents of the predestination who argued that certainly, God does not do evil and does not condone evil

practices. That is why He punishes evildoers and rewards righteous people. God does not create anybody to be rich or to be poor; success or failure, wealth or poverty are results of each man's advantages and initiatives. They asserted that man has his own volition, independence and free will to do what he likes and be rewarded accordingly, good or bad, depending solely on his choice and freewill. Because of the emphasis they laid on freewill of the people thus negating the control of God on man, the opponents of predestination were called Qadarites. Surprisingly, the opponents of predestination used the word Qadarites for the upholders of predestination. The Qadarites refused being called this epithet because the Prophet once said that the Qadarites are enemies of God.

3. They go further to say that that is why the Qur'ān asserts that everybody will be responsible for his own deeds. Qur'ān 17 verse 15 says: 'he who receives guidance receives it for his own benefit and he who goes astray does it at his own risk. No bearer of burden will bear the burden of another nor would we give out punishment to any group of people until we have sent an apostle to give warning'. To argue further that God does not predestine anybody to do evil, promoters of free will, the *Qadariyyah* quotes *Qur'ān* chapter 41 verse 46 which says ' whoever is righteous benefits his own soul and whoever does evil does it against his own soul. Your Lord is never unjust to His servants'. They also point to Qur'ān chapter 76 verse 3, which says: 'God has certainly shown man the way, it's for him to accept or reject'. They therefore reject the arguments put forward by their opponents and assert that anything contrary to their view is misinterpretation.

The pre-deterministes who were surprisingly supported by the majority of the Muslims rejected the argument of free-will group saying that the latter were dualists who had set up the human being as a co-creator with God by believing that human beings can initiate their own actions and thereby determine their own fate. Some of the protagonists were; Ma'bad al Juhani, a citizen of Basra who was killed in 699 AD. Another was Ghaylan ibn Abd al Malik al-Dimashqi who was killed in about 743 AD. So also was Shabib al Najrani, who was killed almost during the same period.

Answers to SAEs 3

4. According to the Sunnis, this belief (on Man's action and future) belongs to the category of things the doing of which is only possible for God. By this, they assert that there is nothing incumbent upon God. He creates faith in Zayd, for example, and gives him knowledge out of His grace without there being any necessity upon Him. Hence the saying: **كل نـعمة منه فضل، وكل نـقمة مـنه عدل (**God's rewarding the obedient is a grace from Him, and His punishing the rebellious is justice by Him). Obedience does not advantage Him nor does rebellion injure

Him. And these acts of obedience or rebellion are only signs of God's rewarding or punishing those described by them. The ones whom He wills to draw near to Himself, He helps to obedience, and in Him who's abandoning and rejecting He wills, He creates rebellion. And all acts of good and bad are by the creation of God, for He creates the creature and that which the creature does as He has said (Q37: 9): "and God has created you and that which ye do". (al-Fudali).

And the proof that possible things are possible in the case of God is that there is a general agreement on their possibility. If the doing of any possible thing was incumbent upon God, the possible would be turned into a necessary thing, if they were hindered from Him, the possible would be turned into an impossible. But the turning of the possible attribute into a necessary or an impossible one is false.

Answers to SAEs 4

5. Murjites are a theological group who believed in leaving the matters of sinners in the hands of God. This puts them in a separate arm from the Kharijites who held the view that a grave sinner should be killed. According to them, grave sins are: the association of partners with God (*shirk*), deliberate killing of human beings without any justification (*qatlu nafs min ghayr ḥaqq*), adultery (*zinā*) and wrong accusation of a married woman of adultery (*qadhful-muḥṣanāt*), apostasy (*riddah*), running away from *Jihād* (*firār min al-Jihād*), magic (*siḥr*), unlawful misappropriation of the wealth of the orphans (*aklu māl al-yatīm*), persistence in unlawful things (*işrār alā dhamb*) etc, etc. The Murjites were not only tolerant to sinners but also hesitant to declare anyone a good or bad Muslim simply because he committed sins. Their argument is that anyone who believes in One God and professes the *Kalmat al-Shahādah* i.e. formula by which a person attests to the unity of God – could not be easily declared a non-Muslim simply because he committed a sin.

Unit 2. The *Khawārij*

CONTENTS

2.1: Introduction
2.2: Learning Outcomes
2.3: Backbround to The *Khawārij*
2.3.1: Emergence of the Kharijites
2.3.2: Division into Sects – the Najdites
2.3.3: Political cum – Theological Doctrines
2.4: Summary
2.5: References/Further Readings
2.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

2.1: INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we shall trace the origin of a political cum theological movement known as the Kharijite in early Islam. We will identify the Azraqites and the Najdites as its two main sub-divisions. There after you will be presented a highlight of the doctrines propounded by the political cum religious sect who has serious theological implications on the course of developments in early Islam.

2.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

1. trace the origin of the Kharijites
2. discuss its division into sub-sects
3. highlight its political cum theological doctrines.

2.3: Backbround to The *Khawārij*

2.3.1: Emergence of the Kharijites

Subsequent to the murder of Uthman b. Affan, the third caliph in Islam on June 17, 656 AD, Ali b. Abi Talib was proclaimed the 4th caliph at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on June 24, 566 AD. Practically, the whole Muslim states acknowledged this succession. The new caliph was the first cousin of Muhammad and first Muslim youth. He offered himself to be assassinated in place of the Prophet by the Makkan idolaters and was later renowned as a fearless combatant in the struggle of Muslims against the polytheists. He was above all a scribe of the Holy Qur'ān, a *Ḥāfiẓ*, exegete and a great (*Ṣaḥābī*). The new caliph was in addition the first cousin of the Prophet, a husband of his favorite daughter Fatimah, the father of his surviving male descendants, Hasan and Husayn. Yet, however, the succession met opposition from certain circles.

Among the opponents was Mu'awiyyah, the governor of his predecessor in charge of Syria. He determined as a relation of the assassinated caliph to take revenge and suspected that if the new caliph was not the assassin, he was a party to the assassination. He thus mobilized supporters from among the people of the territory where he governed and presented the new caliph with a task designed to engender crisis. He boldly asked him to produce the assassins of late Uthman or otherwise he would be held as an accomplice who thereby was not qualified to rule in Islamic territory.

At this point, war became imminent between supporters of Ali and Mu'awiyyah and at a place called Siffin, on the West bank of river Euphrates soldiers of the two parties clashed. When it was becoming clear that victory was swinging to Ali's side, Mu'awiyyah's supporters thought of a trick to avert defeat. They fastened copies of the Holy Qur'ān to their lances, which they held upright for everybody to see. The gesture meant that they wanted Qur'ān, rather than the sword to settle the dispute between them. They shouted: 'Judgment belongs to Allah'. Thus, Ali the caliph accordingly ordered the use of weapon to stop.

However, Ali's agreement to a peace talk wounded the feeling of a large section of his supporters. These supporters angrily broke away from his party. They seceded and were called *Khawārij* – Kharijites meaning seceders. (Singular: *khāriji*). There were people who however tenaciously attached themselves to Ali and sworn never to part with him. They were the *Shī'ah* whose identity and doctrines will be studied in the next unit.

The Kharijites later developed certain theological doctrines, under the leadership of Abdullah b. Wahab al-Rasibi. They considered Ali and his descendants as fallible as any other human being. To them, anybody who committed a sin should be brought to book according to *Qur'ān*ic teachings.

They thought Ali had such qualities, called charisma or supernatural powers; and that was why they followed him in the first instance. But when he went off the track and did not live up to expectation, they abandoned him. For, they could not get a fulfillment of such high quality they anticipated from a charismatic leader.

Muhammad's community was considered to have got that charisma and was regarded charismatic, a member of which was entitled to Salvation and Paradise. Anyone who committed a great sin, the Kharijites argued would go to hell in the hereafter and should therefore be expelled from Muslim

community in this world otherwise he would pollute the community and thereby prevent the law-abiding members from getting Salvation.

Their ambition to have a puritanical society made the Kharijites condemned the Shiites in their impression that both Ali and his sons were infallible leaders. The Kharijites also opposed the prerogative leadership conferred on the Quraysh i.e. that rulers should come from the Quraysh. The Kharijites condemned this. According to them, any Muslim could be the head of an Islamic state provided that he was morally and religiously irreproachable. This standard of righteousness made the Kharijites to hold to the slogan…"*Lā ḥukmah illā lillāh*" (Govenance belong to Allah alone).

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. State the genesis of the Kharijites.

2.3.2: Division into Sects

Later on, many sub-sects emerged within the rank and file of the Kharijites. The most important among them were the Azraqites and the Najdites.

(i) The *Azariqah,* an Arabic sectarian name whose English equivalent is Azraqites, were the most militant among them all under their leader called Nafiu b. Azraq. They often found fault with the government of the day because according to them, many members of the ruling class were sinners who should be fought. They often invited other Muslims who were not Kharijites to join forces with them in order to attack the government. To avoid being arrested, they often withdrew from the society and lived in camps called *Dār-al-Islām* (House of Islam). In other words, they often alienated themselves from the society because they thought the society was infested. They lived in their camps so that they could maintain purity. More often than not, they encouraged other Muslims to dissert their sinful community and migrate to their camp. Those who refused to do so were called sinners and unbelievers who deserved to be killed and whose wives and children should also be killed. They constituted themselves into a terrorist gang because of their extreme puritanical theology.

(ii) The Najdites: The other sub-sect, known in Arabic as Al-Najdat, took their name from their leader Najdat ibn Amir. This sub-sect did not only oppose the government of the day but they also succeeded between 686 AD and 692 AD in establishing an autonomous

government. Their tentacles spread over a large area in central Arabia i.e. Bahrayn, Umman, Yemen and the Hadramawt.

Like the Azraqites, the Najdites views were harsh, but their experience of government in large area made them introduced some innovation e.g. Muslims who did not migrate to them and live among them were not called unbelievers (*kufār*) but hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*). They also told their members who as of necessity have to live under a non-Kharijite government to conceal their religious view so as to avoid persecution and victimization. This is called *Taqiyyah*.

It was not without reason that the Najdites were softer than the Azraqites. They realized that the harsh theological views of the Azraqites could only be put into practice in camp with small population. In a large community, it will be difficult to identify a righteous Muslim from unrighteous ones.

They classified sins under two headings – fundamental and non-fundamental. According to them, it is only Muslims who committed fundamental sins that should be expelled from the community while those who committed non-fundamental sins could be punished only. They also believed that Allah will punish all sinners in the hereafter but He will not allow them to remain permanently in punishment. He will grant respite to all and sundry.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Write short notes on the two most important Kharijites sub-sects, highlighting the differences in their doctrines among other things.

2.3.3: Summary of their Political cum Theological Doctrines

1. The Kharijites opposed the Shiites who believed that the head of state was infallible. According to the Kharijites, anyone could make a mistake and once a leader does this, he should be deposed.
2. The head of state should not come from Quraysh tribe alone. Any Muslim, whether coloured or white could rule provided he was morally and religiously irreproachable.
3. None of the leaders of the Kharijites was from the Quraysh and each of them rather than being referred to as Caliph was called *Amīr-al-Mūminīn* – the Commander of the Faithful.

4. Abu-Bakr and Umar were recognized as caliphs. Uthman was also recognized up to the first six years of his reign and Ali was recognized as a caliph up to the battle of Siffin.
5. According to them, any Muslim who commits a grave sin was an apostate. According to the Azraqite faction, such a Muslim, his wife and his children should be fought.
6. All non-Kharijite Muslims were, in the view of the Kharijites, apostates. They upheld that the conscience of the Kharijite was the only pure conscience and they regarded pure conscience as indispensable complement to purity of the body with which the act of worship could be valid.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Give a list of the main political cum theological doctrines of the Kharijites

2.4: Summary

The Kharijites were a group of supporters of Ali who broke away as a result of his agreement to a peace talk at the Battle of Siffin. They further broke into sub-sects two of which were known as Azraqites and Najdites. To them the Prophet Muhammad's community was considered charismatic, a member of which was entitled to Salvation and Paradise. Anyone who committes a grave sin, the Kharijites argued would go to hell in the hereafter and should therefore be expelled from Muslim community. The Kharijites condemned the Shiites in their impression that both Ali and his sons were infallible leaders. The Kharijites also opposed the prerogative leadership conferred on the Quraysh. According to them, any morally and irreproachable Muslim could be the head of an Islamic state. The Kharijites used the title Amir for their leader; and adopted "*Lā ḥukmah illā lillāh*" as their slogan. The Kharijites were early Muslim theological groups. They opposed the Shites in their infallible Imam doctrine as well as the Sunnis who conferred prerogative leadership on the Quraysh alone. They recognized the caliphate of Abubakr and Umar; and those of Uthman and Ali to a large extent. They regarded kharijism as the only pure conscience complementary to purity of the body required for validity of worship. To them non-Kharijites were apostates and grave sinners should be ostracized.

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London, pp. 308-315.

(3) A. J. Wensick (1932). *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development*, Cambridge University Press.
(4) Hasan Sayyid Mutawalli (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhid*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press. Vol. 3.

2.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answers to SAEs 1

1. After the assaissnation of the third Caliph of Islam, Uthman, Ali was appointed the fourth Caliph but his appointment met resistance from Mu’awiyyah who was then Governor of Syria under the third Caliph. He insisted that the new Caliph should arrest the assassins and bring them to book before he could be accepted as Caliph. After several efforts, the issue resulted to war between supporters of Ali and Mu’awiyyah. They met at a place called Siffin, on the West bank of river Euphrates where soldiers of the two parties clashed. When it was becoming clear that victory was swinging to Ali’s side, Mu’awiyyah’s supporters thought of a trick to avert defeat. They fastened copies of the Holy Qur’ān to their lances, which they held upright for everybody to see. The gesture meant that they wanted Qur’ān, rather than the sword to settle the dispute between them. They shouted: ‘Judgment belongs to Allah’. Thus, Ali the caliph accordingly ordered the use of weapon to stop. However, Ali’s agreement to a peace talk wounded the feeling of a large section of his supporters. These supporters angrily broke away from his party. They seceded and were called *Khawārij* – Kharijites meaning seceders. (Singular: *khāriji*). There were people who however tenaciously attached themselves to Ali and sworn never to part with him.

   The Kharijites later developed certain theological doctrines, under the leadership of Abdullah b. Wahab al-Rasibi. They considered Ali and his descendants as fallible as any other human being. To them, anybody who committed a sin should be brought to book according to *Qur’ān*ic teachings. They thought Ali had such qualities, called charisma or supernatural powers; and that was why they followed him in the first instance. But when he went off the track and did not live up to expectation, they abandoned him. For, they could not get a

fulfillment of such high quality they anticipated from a charismatic leader. They have a standard of righteousness with the slogan…"*Lā ḥukmah illā lillāh*" (Govenance belong to Allah alone).

Answers to SAEs 2

2. there were two many sub-sects that emerged within the rank and file of the Kharijites later on but the most important among them were the Azraqites and the Najdites.

(i) The *Azariqah,* an Arabic sectarian name whose English equivalent is Azraqites, were the most militant among them all under their leader called Nafiu b. Azraq. They often found fault with the government of the day because according to them, many members of the ruling class were sinners who should be fought. They had camps where they often invited other Muslims who were not Kharijites to join forces with them in order to attack the government. To avoid being arrested, they often withdrew from the society and lived in camps called *Dār-al-Islām* (House of Islam). They lived in their camps so that they could maintain purity. More often than not, they encouraged other Muslims to dissert their sinful community and migrate to their camp. Those who refused to do so were called sinners and unbelievers who deserved to be killed and whose wives and children should also be killed. They constituted themselves into a terrorist gang because of their extreme puritanical theology.

(ii) The Najdites: The other sub-sect, known in Arabic as Al-Najdat, took their name from their leader Najdat ibn Amir. This sub-sect did not only oppose the government of the day but they also succeeded between 686 AD and 692 AD in establishing an autonomous government. Their tentacles spread over a large area in central Arabia i.e. Bahrayn, Umman, Yemen and the Hadramawt. Like the Azraqites, the Najdites views were harsh, but their experience of government in large area made them introduced some innovation e.g. Muslims who did not migrate to them and live among them were not called unbelievers (*kufār*) but hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*). They also told their members who as of necessity have to live under a non-Kharijite government to conceal their religious view so as to avoid persecution and victimization. This is called *Taqiyyah*. They classified sins under two headings – fundamental and non-fundamental. According to them, it is only Muslims who committed fundamental sins that should be expelled from the community while those who committed non-fundamental sins could be punished only. They also believed that

Allah will punish all sinners in the hereafter but He will not allow them to remain permanently in punishment. He will grant respite to all and sundry.

Answers to SAEs 3

3. Following are some political cum theologigal beliefs of Kharijites:

1. The Kharijites opposed the Shiites who believed that the head of state was infallible. According to the Kharijites, anyone could make a mistake and once a leader does this, he should be deposed.
2. The head of state should not come from Quraysh tribe alone. Any Muslim, whether coloured or white could rule provided he was morally and religiously irreproachable.
3. None of the leaders of the Kharijites was from the Quraysh and each of them rather than being referred to as Caliph was called *Amīr-al-Mūminīn* – the Commander of the Faithful.
4. Abu-Bakr and Umar were recognized as caliphs. Uthman was also recognized up to the first six years of his reign and Ali was recognized as a caliph up to the battle of Siffin.
5. According to them, any Muslim who commits a grave sin was an apostate. According to the Azraqite faction, such a Muslim, his wife and his children should be fought.
6. All non-Kharijite Muslims were, in the view of the Kharijites, apostates. They upheld that the conscience of the Kharijite was the only pure conscience and they regarded pure conscience as indispensable complement to purity of the body with which the act of worship could be valid.

Unit 3: The *Shī'ah*

CONTENTS

3.1: Introduction
3.2: Learning Outcomes
3.3: Background to the *Shī'ah*
3.3.1: Main Doctrines of the *Shī'ah*
3.3.2: *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (the Twelvers)
3.3.3: *Ismā'īliyyah/ Sab 'iyyah* (the Seveners)
3.3.4: *Zaydiyyah* ---(the Zaydites)
3.4: Summary
3.5: References/Further Readings
3.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The word *Shī'ah* in the Arabic tongue connotes followers, allies, party or factions. As an Islamic theological term, the *Shī'ah* are those who swore allegiance with 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, (the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad) in particular and believe that his Imamate, Caliphate or Muslim leadership is testamentary; who consider him the only rightful successor of the Prophet in the temporal and spiritual matters, and deny this right to all who did not belong to his House. It applies also to his loyalists during his struggles with Mu'āwiyyah and supporters of the members of his household after im.

The *Shī'ah* did not surface as a conspicuous entity during the lifetime of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib; nor did they adopt the nomenclature. It was his murder and the murder of his son Husain at Karbala that made them politico - religious entity supporting his descendants and working towards establishing a state in their name by regarding them the rightful Caliph and formulating principles and doctrines peculiar to them.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to

(i) define shiism and identify its main creeds.

(ii) discuss the *Ithna'ashariyyah*, *Sab-'iyyah* and *Zaydiyyah* Shiite sub-sects

(iii) distinguish between the creeds of the various.

3.3: Background to the *Shī'ah*

3.3.1 The Main *Shī'ah* Creeds:

The creeds general to all *Shī'ah* groups are in connection with five issues; viz.
(i) the Imamate (ii) Relationship between Ali, the *Ṣaḥābah* and the rest of Muslims. (iii) *'Ismah* of the Imams (iv) *Taqiyyah* and (v) *Raj 'ah* or Mahdism.

(i) *Imāmah* (Imamate): To them, as belief in God is an Article of Faith, so also is the belief that *Imamah* (the temporal and spiritual leadership of the *Muslim Ummah*) after Prophet Muhammad is hereditary in the House-hold of Ali. This, they argue is because Ali as a nephew to the Prophet Muhammad (S) and husband of Fatimah his daughter, must have inherited the rights to rule the *Ummah* and interpret the *Sharīʿah* from the Prophet. Their children too should have been bequeathed such divine rights by their parents. Such powers could only be found in the descendants of Fatima and Ali.

The *Shī'ah* even hold that the Prophet appointed 'Alī as his vicegerent in his Sermon delivered before thousands of his disciples at Ghadīrul-Khūm on the outskirts of Madina in 10 A.H. (632 C.E.) when he said: *fa man kuntu mawlāhu, fa 'Aliyyun mawlāhu*, meaning "hence whoever recognizes me as his Master, for him 'Alī (too) is Master," With that statement the appointment (*naşş*) of 'Alī as his vicegerent was completed and never revoked. In fact, later incidents mentioned by *Shī'ī* authors show that the Prophet confirmed and acted on the assumption that 'Alī was the heir apparent of the spiritual kingdom. The salvation of man is in the love and devotion to the *Imām*. This is known as '*walāya*h'.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Explain the Imamate Creed of the *Shī'ah*

(ii) Relationship between Ali, the *Şahābah* and the rest of Muslims.
The moderate Shiites are of the view that all the adversaries and opponents of Ali are sinners and will be perpetual in the hell fire like the infidels unless their repentance is established and they die on love and devotion to Ali.

As for the Muhājirs, the Ansārs, and the Righteous Caliphs before him, since Ali acknowledged them, related well with them and did not raise sword against them or invite anybody to do so, they cannot condemn them. Since 'Alī accepted their leadership and observed *Ṣalāt* behind them, he has to be

emulated and none can go beyond reports about his attitude to them. Since it was established that ‘Alī did not curse the Sahabis the moderate Shiites will also treat them in likewise manner. To the moderate *Shīʿah* also, the rank of Prophethood was higher than the rank of the *Imām*.

But there are Shiites who called the Chosen Sahabis infidels; and call the Caliphs before him usurpers of his right. They claim that when the Prophet was aware his death was imminent, he sent Abu Bakr and ‘Umar away in Usamah ibn Zayd’s expedition, in order to clear the city of all possible opposition and paving the way of securing *bayʿah* (pledge of allegiance) for him from the remaining people. Usamah’s troops however dilly dallied for days against the wish of the Prophet and the aim was not achieved.

In their attempts to defend their doctrines, some Shiites formulated dangerous ideas, raising doubts about the authenticity of the Qur ‘ān and *Ḥadīth* in the hands of the generality of Muslims; and claiming that only their scholars are in custody of the authentic ones.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Explain the Shiite creeds relating to the relationship between Ali, the *Ṣahābah* and the rest of Muslims

(iii) *ʻIsmah* (Infallibility of the Imāms):
The *Shīʿah* believe that the *Imām* was infallible (*maʿsūm*); he can never commit minor nor major sins because he is the link between God and humanity like the Prophets and Apostles of God. He receives revelations though of an invisible nature. It however seems the early *Imām* did not conceive the *ʻIsmah* doctrine and that the extremist *Shīʿah* developed the idea later; a situation which led the *Imām* to be going into hiding and obscurity as a result of which people were denied access to evaluate their actions. Meanwhile, the *Shīʿah* claims the Imāms do things through divine inspiration and Commandment. They see the *Imām* as the lawgiver and law enforcer who cannot be censored. He is the proof of God (*Ḥujjatullāh*) and sign of God (*Ayatullāh*).

(iv) *Taqiyyah*:
The *Shīʿah* believe in the expediency of *Taqiyyah*, (i.e.dissimulation or concealment of proper religious identity and theological feeling by a *Shīʿī*) when dwelling in a non-*Shīʿah* State or under threat of injury to his life or property. This also means pretension, deceit and saying something contrary to what one harbours in mind. The *Shīʿah* theologians find basis for this belief. They quote Q.3:28 & Q.16:106 to buttress the doctrine. They regard

'Ali's silence on the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, his prayer behind them and association with them as acts of *Taqiyyah*.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Explain the *'Ismah* and *Taqiyyah* doctrines of the *Shi 'ah.*

(v) *Raj'ah* or Mahdism:

The *Shī'ah* believe their *Imām* is deathless; has miraculously remained alive since

his ***ghaybah*** (absence), and is an Expected Messiah who will return to fill the earth with justice, equity and prosperity. Perhaps the first to innovate this doctrine was Abdullah b. Sabai, when he claimed that 'Ali was not killed; he was a Mahdi, an Expected Messiah who is coming back to the world to avenge his enemies. This idea then passed from his group (the *Saba'iyyah*) to the Kīsāniyyah who made Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah their Mahdī; despite the fact that he has died, Abban ibn 'Uthmān the then Governor of Madina said the funeral prayer on him; and was buried at Baqī' near the Prophet's Mosque in Madina.

The Ithnā 'Asharīs (Twelvers) believe in ***ghaybah***, that is, the disappearance of the *Imām* from the world; not so the Ismā'īlīs. They believe there can be no ***ghaybah*** in this world. The *Imām* cannot completely disappear, even if to the profane eyes of the people he is invisible **(*mastūr***), hidden from the sight of those whose vision does not possess the penetration of the true adept. If the *Imām* were to disappear from the world even for a moment, "verily, the earth would perish with all their in." This Mahdism is sometimes termed *'Raj'ah* Doctrine,' meaning the returning of the *Imām*. Some *Shī'ah* have however interpreted it to mean return of States and not return of deceased Imams.

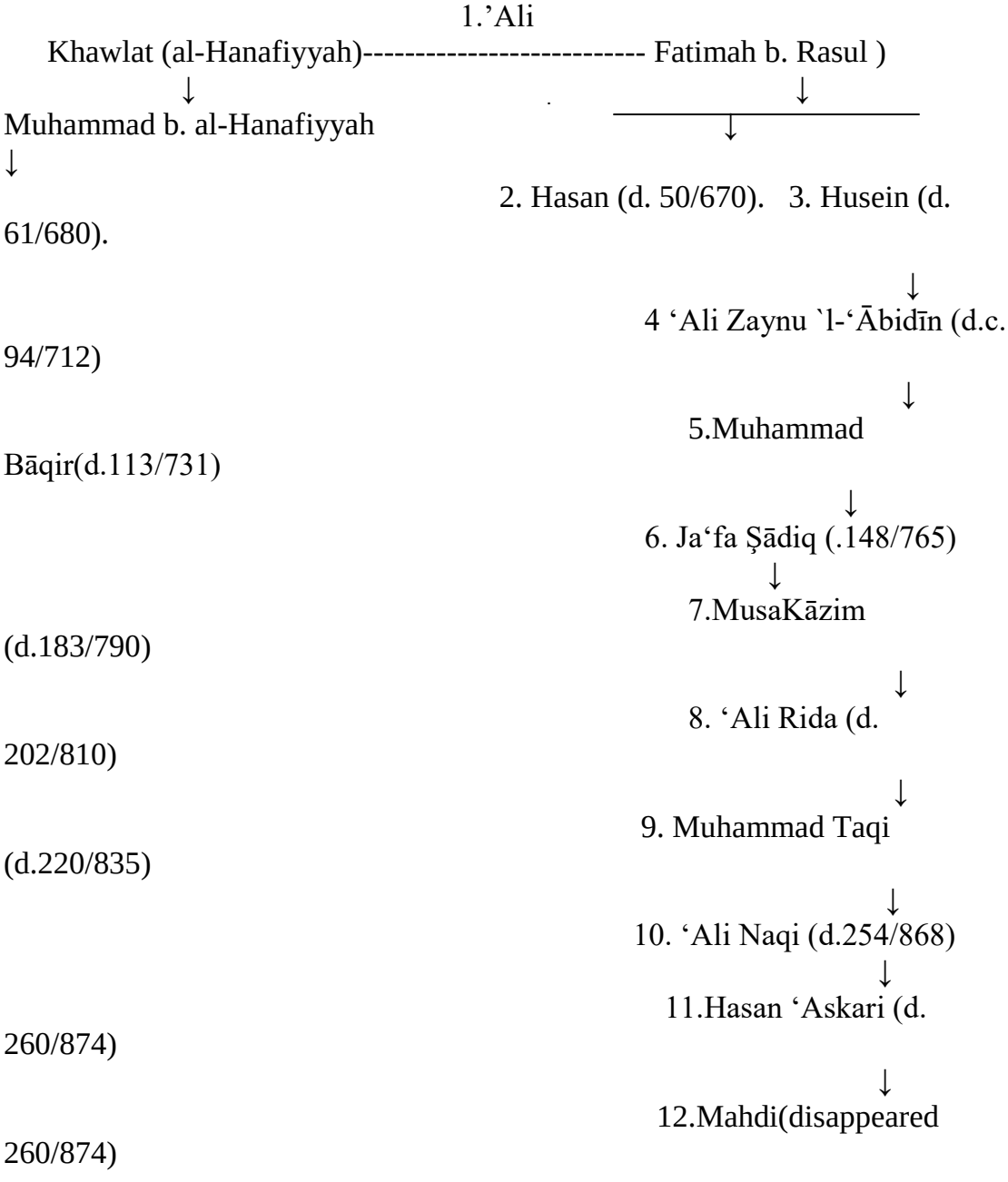
Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Discuss *Raj'ah* or Mahdism as a doctrine of the various *Shī'ah* denominations**.**

3.3.2. *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (The Twelvers)

Meanwhile the *Shī'ah* are divided into several schools of theological thought and the principal case for the division was the succession after 'Alī Zaynul-'Ābidīn, the fourth *Imām*. The majority of the *Shī'ah* followed Muhammad al-Bāqir and after him Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. After the death of Ja'far, another split took place, the majority followed Musā al-Kāzim and six Imāms after him, thus making twelve Imāms in all hence, the name *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* ("Twelvers"). The *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* school, sometimes called the

Ja'fariyyah, deriving from the name of the sixth *Imām*, Ja'far, spread widely in Persia especially during the Safawid rulers era (908-1148 A.H) when every ruler claimed to be descendant of Musa Kāzim, the seventh *Imām*. And its spirit permeates a large number of articles in the Iranian Constitution till today.



Shah Ismā'īl, on ascending the thrown in 909 A.H. ordered the inclusion of the names of their Imāms in Friday sermons and ***ash-hadu anna Aliyyān waliyyullāh*** in the *Adhān* (call to *Ṣalāt*-prayer); and the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* doctrine has so widely dominated the Iranian society and governance that it

has become the Official religious school in Iran and the constitution stipulates that the Shah was ruling on behalf of the Expected Mahdi. That was the status quo until the Iranian revolution of 1979. The *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* also constitute the majority of the *Shī‘ah* and are also to be found in Iraq and in smaller groups in India.

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

5. Examine the *Ithna 'ashariyyah/ Jafariyyah* as having majority of the *Shī'ah* follower-ship.

3.3.3. *Ismā‘īliyyah* (the Seveners)

The minority of the *Shī’ah*, after the death of Ja‘far, did not acknowledge Mūsā al-Kāzim but followed his elder brother, Ismā‘īl, as the seventh *Imām* and have since then been known as Ismā‘īlīs or “ *Sab‘iyyah*, Seveners.” The basis of the *Ismā‘īliyyah* creed as crystallized under Fatimids of Egypt is the belief that there are two aspects of knowledge, namely the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*), hence the Ismā‘īlis name, *bāṭiniyyah*). The *ẓāhir* of the Qur‘ān is *tanzīl* while the ***bāṭin*** is ***ta’wīl*** known to the Prophet who imparted it to his Imāms They are mostly to be found in India, but small groups of them live in Central Asia, Iran, Syria, and the Persian gulf emirates. The *Ismā’iliyyah* were operating underground under the leadership of propagandists listed below until they founded the Fatimid State in Egypt (297 – 567 / 909-1171).

Ismā‘īl (d.145 A.H.)
(son of Ja‘far Sādiq and the seventh *Imām* recognized by them)
↓
Muhammad Ismā‘īl
↓

↓
Muhammad al-Maktūm
(the first hidden *Imām*)
↓
Ja‘far al-Musaddiq
↓
Muahammad al-Habīb
(the last of the Hidden Imāms)
↓
Abīdullah al-Mahdī 1 (297 – 322 A.H.)
(the first of the Fatimid Rulers,

his campaign declared open by Abū ‘Abdullah)

The Ismā‘īlis dominated the history of Islam for a long period; adopting neo-platonic philosophy as presented by the *Ikhwānul-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity) in their Rasā`il (Episles) and applying it to their Shiite theology.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

6. Expound Isma'ilism and state their impact on the history of Islam

3.3.4. *Zaydiyyah* -- (the Zaydites)

After the death of ‘Ali Zaynu `l-‘Ābidīn, his son Zayd (d.122 A.H /742 C.E.) who was living in Madina was invited to Kufa to become the *Imām*. He accepted the invitation and his group were called the *Zaydiyyah* (Zaydis). On his arrival at Kufah in 120 A.H. / 740 C.E., over 15,000 people pledged loyalty to him. He and his supporters thus revolted and made a realistic attempt to make an alternative government to that of the Umayyads in Damascus. Their first attack was made upon the Umayyad governor in Iraq – Yusuf ibn ‘Umar al-Thaqafi. When the war broke out, Zayd was deserted by a large number of his soldiers who had previously given him assurance on the ground that he gave concession to Abubakr and Umar. He therefore suffered utter defeat from the hands of his opponent and as a result of the wound he sustained during the war, Zayd eventually died in 123 A.H. / 743 C.E. He was succeeded in the Shiite Imamate by his son, Yahya , who was also killed during the battle against the Umayyad forces in 126 A.H. / 746 C.E. A few doctrines and ideologies of the *Zaydiyyah* are as follows:

They recognized the principle of election as basis for succession. This must however be from the erudite scholars among the offspring of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet only. Thus they did not recognize Imāmate of Muhammad, son of ‘Ali from Khawlah of the al-Hanafiyyah tribe.

1 They believed in the superiority of ‘Ali’s Imāmate over Abubakr and ‘Umar’s caliphate. To some of them, the Imāmate of the inferior (*Imāmat al-Mafdūl*) was permissible. It is this concession however that seemed to have alienated the more thorough going Shiites within the *Zaydiyyah*.
2. It was conditioned to them that to become an *Imām*, a revolt must be staged. Thus they moved Imāmate from being a secret affair to an open one.
3. The majority of the Zaydis disapprove the principles of ***‘Ismah***, ***Taqiyyah*** and ***Raj‘ah***.
4. Some Zaydīs were Mu‘tazilites while some were salafīs.

5. Most of them belong to the Hanafīs School of Islamic law while some are Shāfiites.

Within a thousand years, many Zaydis were killed in the battlefields and many succeeded in establishing Shiite states and died naturally. In 1322 A.H/1901 C. E. the Zaydis were able to re- establish a Zaydiyyah State in Yemen after a revolt against the Turkish Ottomans which Yemen revolution of 1962 terminated. Yemen however still remains the stronghold and center of the Zaydīs.

Self Assessment Exercise 7 (SAEs)

7. Give a highlight of *Zaydiyyah* doctrines; and a brief statement on their history.

3.4: Summary

The *Shī'ah* are a politico-religious sect in Islam who believed among other things that leadership of the Muslims should be from Ali and his descendants. **T**hey are divided into several schools of theological thought and the principal case for the division was the succession after ʻAlī Zaynu `l-ʻĀbidīn, the fourth *Imām* . The three prominent groups among them are the *Ithna 'ashariyyah /Ja'fariyyah*, the *Ismailiyyah*, and the *Zaydiyyah* who all played and are still playing significant roles in the politics and history of the Muslim world. A summary of the fundermental politico-theological doctrines of the *Shīʻah* could be given as follows:

(i) Imamate is a pillar of Islam. It is not a matter for public consideration. Thus it was an incumbent duty of Prophet Muhammad to appoint an infallible *Imām* for the *Ummah*.

(ii) The Prophet (S) designated Ali as his *Wasiyy*. He was thus *Imām* by Testamentary Statement and not by election. The Imamate should be hereditary among his descendants.

(iii) Ali is the best of the creatures in the two abodes after Prophet Muhammad. Whoever antagonizes him or harbours hatred for him is an enemy of God.

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3.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answer to SAEs 1

1. *Imāmah* (Imamate): To Shi'ites, as belief in God is an Article of Faith, so also is the belief that *Imamah* (the temporal and spiritual leadership of the *Muslim Ummah*) after Prophet Muhammad is hereditary in the House-hold of Ali. This, they argue is because Ali as a nephew to the Prophet Muhammad (S) and husband of Fatimah his daughter, must have inherited the rights to rule the *Ummah* and interpret the *Sharīʿah* from the Prophet. Their children too should have been bequeathed such divine rights by their parents. Such powers could only be found in the descendants of Fatima and Ali.

Answer to SAEs 2

2. The Shi'ites believe in the relationship between Ali, the *Ṣahābah* and the rest of
As follow:
The moderate Shiites are of the view that all the adversaries and opponents of Ali are sinners and will be perpetual in the hell fire like the infidels unless their repentance is established and they die on love and devotion to Ali. As for the Muhājirs, the Ansārs, and the Righteous Caliphs before him, since Ali acknowledged them, related well with them and did not raise sword against them or invite anybody to do so, they cannot condemn them. Since it was established that 'Alī did not curse the Sahabis the moderate Shiites will also

treat them in likewise manner as they also believe that the rank of Prophethood was higher than the rank of the *Imām*.

But there are Shiites who called the Chosen Sahabis infidels; and call the Caliphs before him usurpers of his right. They claim that when the Prophet was aware his death was imminent, he sent Abu Bakr and ‘Umar away in Usamah ibn Zayd’s expedition, in order to clear the city of all possible opposition and paving the way of securing *bay‘ah* (pledge of allegiance) for him from the remaining people. Usamah’s troops however dilly dallied for days against the wish of the Prophet and the aim was not achieved. In their attempts to defend their doctrines, some Shiites formulated dangerous ideas, raising doubts about the authenticity of the Qur ‘ān and *Ḥadīth* in the hands of the generality of Muslims; and claiming that only their scholars are in custody of the authentic ones.

Answer to SAEs 3

3. *‘Ismah* (Infallibility of the Imāms) is one of the beliefs of *Shī‘ah* that the *Imām* was infallible (*ma‘sūm*); he can never commit minor nor major sins because he is the link between God and humanity like the Prophets and Apostles of God. He receives revelations though of an invisible nature. It however seems the early *Imām* did not conceive the *‘Ismah* doctrine and that the extremist *Shī‘ah* developed the idea later; a situation which led the *Imām* to be going into hiding and obscurity as a result of which people were denied access to evaluate their actions. Meanwhile, the *Shī‘ah* claims the Imāms do things through divine inspiration and Commandment. They see the *Imām* as the lawgiver and law enforcer who cannot be censored. He is the proof of God (*Ḥujjatullāh*) and sign of God (*Ayatullāh*).

Taqiyyah, on the other hand, is another *Shī‘ah’s* belief, which is in the expediency of *Taqiyyah*, (i.e.dissimulation or concealment of proper religious identity and theological feeling by a *Shī‘ī*) when dwelling in a non-*Shī‘ah* State or under threat of injury to his life or property. This also means pretension, deceit and saying something contrary to what one harbours in mind. The *Shī‘ah* theologians find basis for this belief. They quote Q.3:28 & Q.16:106 to buttress the doctrine. They regard ‘Ali’s silence on the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, his prayer behind them and association with them as acts of *Taqiyyah*.

Answer to SAEs 4

4. *Raj‘ah* or Mahdismis that the *Shī‘ah* believe their *Imām* is deathless; has miraculously remained alive since his ***ghaybah*** (absence), and is an Expected Messiah who will return to fill the earth with justice, equity and prosperity. Perhaps the first to innovate this doctrine was Abdullah b. Sabai, when he

claimed that ‘Ali was not killed; he was a Mahdi, an Expected Messiah who is coming back to the world to avenge his enemies. This idea then passed from his group (the *Saba’iyyah*) to the Kīsāniyyah who made Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah their Mahdī; despite the fact that he has died, Abban ibn ‘Uthmān the then Governor of Madina said the funeral prayer on him; and was buried at Baqī‘ near the Prophet’s Mosque in Madina.
The Ithnā ‘Asharīs (Twelvers) believe in ***ghaybah***, that is, the disappearance of the *Imām* from the world; not so the Ismā‘īlīs. They believe there can be no ***ghaybah*** in this world. The *Imām* cannot completely disappear, even if to the profane eyes of the people he is invisible **(*mastūr*)**, hidden from the sight of those whose vision does not possess the penetration of the true adept. If the *Imām* were to disappear from the world even for a moment, “verily, the earth would perish with all their in.” This Mahdism is sometimes termed *‘Raj‘ah* Doctrine,’ meaning the returning of the *Imām*. Some *Shī‘ah* have however interpreted it to mean return of States and not return of deceased Imams.

Answer to SAEs 5
5. The *Shī‘ah* are divided into several schools of theological thought and the principal case for the division was the succession after ‘Alī Zaynul-‘Ābidīn, the fourth *Imām*. The majority of the *Shī‘ah* followed Muhammad al-Bāqir and after him Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. After the death of Ja‘far, another split took place, the majority followed Musā al-Kāzim and six Imāms after him, thus making twelve Imāms in all hence, the name *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* (“Twelvers”). The *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* school, sometimes called the *Ja‘fariyyah*, deriving from the name of the sixth *Imām*, Ja‘far, spread widely in Persia especially during the Safawid rulers era (908-1148 A.H) when every ruler claimed to be descendant of Musa Kāzim, the seventh *Imām*. Its spirit permeates a large number of articles in the Iranian Constitution till today.

Answer to SAEs 6
6. The minority of the *Shī’ah*, after the death of Ja‘far, did not acknowledge Mūsā al-Kāzim but followed his elder brother, Ismā‘īl, as the seventh *Imām* and have since then been known as Ismā‘īlīs or “ *Sab‘iyyah*, Seveners.” The basis of the *Ismā‘īliyyah* creed as crystallized under Fatimids of Egypt is the belief that there are two aspects of knowledge, namely the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and the esoteric (*bāṭin*), hence the Ismā‘īlis name, *bāṭiniyyah*). The *ẓāhir* of the Qur‘ān is *tanzīl* while the ***bāṭin*** is ***ta’wīl*** known to the Prophet who imparted it to his Imāms They are mostly to be found in India, but small groups of them live in Central Asia, Iran, Syria, and the Persian gulf emirates. The *Ismā’iliyyah* were operating underground under the leadership of propagandists until they founded the Fatimid State in Egypt (297 – 567 /

909-1171). The Ismā‘īlis dominated the history of Islam for a long period; adopting neo-platonic philosophy as presented by the *Ikhwānul-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity) in their Rasā`il (Epistles) and applying it to their Shiite theology.

Answer to SAEs 7

7. A few doctrines and ideologies of the *Zaydiyyah* are as follows:
They recognized the principle of election as basis for succession. This must however be from the erudite scholars among the offspring of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet only. Thus they did not recognize Imāmate of Muhammad, son of ‘Ali from Khawlah of the al-Hanafiyyah tribe.

- They believed in the superiority of ‘Ali’s Imāmate over Abubakr and ‘Umar’s caliphate. To some of them, the Imāmate of the inferior (*Imāmat al-Mafdūl*) was permissible. It is this concession however that seemed to have alienated the more thorough going Shiites within the *Zaydiyyah*.
- It was conditioned to them that to become an *Imām*, a revolt must be staged. Thus they moved Imāmate from being a secret affair to an open one.
- The majority of the Zaydis disapprove the principles of ***‘Ismah***, ***Taqiyyah*** and ***Raj‘ah***.
- Some Zaydīs were Mu‘tazilites while some were salafīs.
- Most of them belong to the Hanafīs School of Islamic law while some are Shāfiites.

This is brief history of *Zaydiyyah*: After the death of ‘Ali Zaynu `l-‘Ābidīn, his son Zayd (d.122 A.H /742 C.E.) who was living in Madina was invited to Kufa to become the *Imām*. He accepted the invitation and his group were called the *Zaydiyyah* (Zaydis). On his arrival at Kufah in 120 A.H. / 740 C.E., over 15,000 people pledged loyalty to him. He and his supporters thus revolted and made a realistic attempt to make an alternative government to that of the Umayyads in Damascus. However, they lost the battles against the Umayyad governor in Iraq – Yusuf ibn ‘Umar al-Thaqafi. This resulted to the death of Zayd in 123 A.H. / 743 C.E. He was succeeded in the Shiite Imamate by his son, Yahya , who was also killed during the battle against the Umayyad forces in 126 A.H. / 746 C.E.

Within a thousand years, many Zaydis were killed in the battlefields and many succeeded in establishing Shiite states and died naturally. In 1322 A.H/1901 C. E. the Zaydis were able to re- establish a Zaydiyyah State in Yemen after a revolt against the Turkish Ottomans which Yemen revolution of 1962 terminated. Yemen however still remains the stronghold and center of the Zaydīs.

Unit 4: *Ghulātul-Shī'ah* (Extrimist Shiites)

CONTENTS

4.1: Introduction
4.2: Learning Outcomes
4.3: Background to *Ghulātul-Shī'ah* (Extrimist Shiites)
4.3.1. The *Saba'iyyah*
4.3.2. The *Kīsāniyyah or Mukhtāriyyah:*
4.3.3. The *Agha Khāniyyah*:
4.3.4. The *Durūz* :
4.3.5. The Bhoras
4.3.6. *Al-Nuşayriyyah* (the Nusayrīs)
4.4: Summary
4.5: References/Further Readings
4.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit Two, shī'ism was defined and its major doctrines discussed. The fundamental doctrines of the *Ithnā-'Ashariyyah* (Twelvers) popularly known as *Ja'fariyyah,* the *Ismā 'iliyyah,* also called (the Seveners), and the *Zaydiyyah* and their history were presented in brief. These three are usually regarded as main *Shī'ah* groups and generally moderate. This Unit aims at dealing with six groups that are regarded as extremists.

4.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) expound on the seven extremist *Shī'ah* groups
(ii) trace their origin and expose their extremism
(iii) discuss their history and pinpoint their location.

4.3: Background to *Ghulātul-Shī'ah* (Extrimist Shiites)

4.3.1 The *Saba'iyyah* :

The *Saba'iyyah* was one of the first extremist *Shī'ah* group who were heretical in ideology and perhaps harboured evil intentions against Islam. It was named after Abdullah b Saba'i, a former Jew who came from Yemen. When 'Alī was appointed to succeed 'Uthmān, he was one of the first people to pay homage to him and soon afterwards, he started to weave doctrines that were completely strange to Islam around 'Alī's personality. He alleged that Muhammad will come back to the world and he had as his own slogan, the following statement:

> It is amazing for people to believe that Jesus will come back and to disbelieve in the coming back of Muhammad, whereas God says in the Qur'ān chapter 28 verse 85 that – certainly the one who revealed the Qur'ān on you will return you back to your place.

He also alleged that he saw in the Torah (Taorah) that every Prophet usually had a successor and therefore 'Alī was the successor to Muhammad and as Muhammad was the best of the Prophets, 'Alī was the best of the successors. He went to the extent of proclaiming 'Alī as a prophet. Worst still, he called him ***Juz'un min Allah*** (divine part) or God incarnate.

When 'Alī was assassinated another doctrine innovated by ibn Saba'i for his group was that 'Alī was not killed. He claimed that it was the devil that appeared in 'Alī's shape and got killed in his place. As Jews and Christians lied in their claim that Prophet Īsā (Jesus) was put to death on the cross whereas it was only made to appear to them as such, so also was the case with 'Alī. 'Alī was raised to the heaven and he is coming back to rule the world.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Examine the claim that the extinct *Saba'iyyah* was an extremist Shiite group.

4.3.2 The *Kīsaniyyah or Mukhtāriyyah*:

This is another heretical sub-sect of the *Shī'ah*, which called people to accept Muhammad uncle of 'Alī, popularly known as al-Hanafiyyah (16 A.H. to 81 A.H.) as the *Imām*. The leader of this sub-sect was al Mukhtār b. Abī Abīd al-Thaqafī nicknamed Kisān, hence the appellation *Kisāniyyah*. This sub-sect is sometimes called *Mukhtāriyyah* which is a title derived from Mukhtār, the proper name of its leader.

When Mukhtār has achieved his aims, he started talking like a soothsayer imitating the Qur'ān in form and contents in his utterances. Then he claimed that he was a prophet receiving revelations. When some of his followers realized that they had been misled, they decamped but al-Mukhtār was then still enjoying the support of the *Saba'iyyah* and many other Shiites.

Al-Mukhtār had an ancient chair expensively decorated, which he claimed to be part of 'Alī's heritage. Whenever he went for war, he carried the chair along with him as the Jews used to do with their arch. Al-Mukhtār however met his death in the battle against Abdullah b. Zubayr in 67 A.H. at Kufah.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Who were the *Kīsāniyyah/Mukhtāriyyah Shī'ah*? Expose their heretical beliefs.

4.3.3. The *Agha Khāniyyah*: The founder of this sect, Hasan as-Sabaḥ was born in Rayy in the 5th Century A.H. He emerged in India and was accused of working for the Fatimids by the vizier of Malik Shah. He thus fled to 'Alamut in Qazwin where he founded a well-fortified location, training disciples and spreading *Bāṭiniyyah* doctrines. He succeeded in raising strong followership and became influential in the region. He established beautiful gardens to entice neghbouring people. He induced them to smoke weeds (*Hashīsh*) and his followers were notorious as ***Hashshāshīn*.** Sultan Malik Shah sent a large army to fight them when they became dangerous but they resisted and assassinated his vizier; and this act possibly led the Europeans to call them the Assassins. They remained a strong force in their location until the Mongol warriors under their Commander Holako massacred them. The sect's followers in Shām also played prominent role in fighting the Crusaders. Ṣalāhud-Dīn, the Ayyubid had to fight them till they surrendered when the Muslims also were not safe from their danger. Members scattered all over Syria, Persia, Oman, Zanzibar and India. They were called Khojas in India and they accepted Agha Khan of Bombay as their titular head because Agha Khan himself took Ismā'il, the seventh *Imām* as his ancestor.

In the Bahrain the *Bāṭiniyyah* were known as ***al-Qarāmiṭah*** (the Qarmatians), a word derived from the name of their leader Hamdān Qarmat, an Iraqi national who claimed to have got the ability to read the stars. In 890 C.E., he built a residence near Kufah which he called *Dāru `l-Muhājirīn* i.e. Abode of Emigrants. When his sub-sect grew large they became dangerous to the inhabitant of Hijāz, Shām and Irāq. In 930 C.E. the Qarmatians entered Makkah and carried away the Black Stone and kept it in their custody for twenty years. It was only returned at the order of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mansūr. The Ismāilīs of Persia, India, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Oman and the Arab Gulf now are bāṭinīs. The descendants of Agha Khān in India who regarded himself a descendant of Hasan al-Ṣabaḥ is their acknowledged leader. They are now in peaceful and cordial relations with Muslims.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Would you regard the *Aghakhāniyyah* a heterodox or orthodox Shiite Muslims? Trace their origins briefly and give reasons for your view.

4.3.4. The Durūz :

The Durūz sect was named after Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl Durzī (d. 411 A.H.); but the adherents call themselves '*Muwaḥḥidūn*' (Unitarians). It is a sub-sect which emerged during the reign of al-Hākim bin Amrillah who claimed divinity, and whom Muhammad Durzī visited in 408 A.H. He later sojourned in Shām concentrating his propaganda on behalf of the ruler among the Jews and the Christians.

The major doctrine of the Durūz is divinity of their ruler and his second coming at the end of time. The sub-sect has recently published a book entitled *Maṣḥafud-Durūz* (The Durūz Scripture) in which attempt is made to imitate the Qur`ān as did Musaylimah in the past. It is a recent publication but the authour attempted to ascribe it to some early Durūz Imams; he was however exposed by some modern words. The *Durūz* reside today in Lebanon, Baniyas and Mountains of the Hurān Hill usually called Durūz Mountains.

4.3.5. The Bhoras

The name Bhoras, an ancient Indian word meaning Traders, derives for this Ismā'īlī sub-sect because its early adherents were converts among the Hindu Traders. The sub-sect has its center in India, Pakistan and Southern Yemen. Their main doctrine is the divinity of their *Imām*. They maintain special places for their *Ṣalāt*, which they call "Jamiu Khānah". They pray for the *Isma'īliyyah* hidden *Imām* from among the descendants of Al-Tayyib b. al-Āmir and are thus like idolaters. They take Ka'bah to be symbol of their *Imām*. **T**wo of their scriptures containing biographies of their Propagandists and some of their aphorisms are *Da'ā'imu `l-Islām* and *Al-Ḥaqā'iq*.

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Trace the origins of the Durūz and the Bhoras. Would you regard them as heterodox or orthodox Shiite Muslims? Give reasons for your view.

4.3.6. *Al-Nuşayriyyah* (the Nuşayrīs)

The founder of *Nuşayriyyah* was Muhammad ibn Nuşayr al-Numayrī a follower of al-Hasan al-'Askrī, the eleventh of the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah Imām*s. After the death of Hasan, he first claimed to be his Bāb (Representative of his son). He then claimed to be an apostle and a prophet

sent by God. He later disapproved the Imāmate of al-Hasan and his son and claimed transfiguration and incarnation and made prohibited practices permissible for his followers. He died in 260 A.H.

The real propagandist and author of the *Nuşayriyyah* doctrines was al-Hasan ibn Hamdān al-Khusaybī (260-346 A.H.) He stayed in Baghdad and moved from one place to another until he settled finally in Syria in the city of Halab. Later, al-Ladhiqiyyah, on the mountain known by the name of the sub-sect became their main center.

The belief of the Nuşayrīs:

1. The pivot of *Nuşayriyyah* doctrine is the divinity of ‘Alī. They argue that this is not unreasonable. Good, represented by Jibril, appeared in form of man; while evil, represented by devil appeared in form of man; so also is Jin, it appeared in form of man and spoke in man’s tongue; hence their belief that God appeared in form of man and ‘Alī was God incarnate. No doubt, it is a faulty analogy and an absurdity that Allah, the Creator incarnated in His creature. He, the Almighty has said : *laisa kamithlihi shay’un*” (Nothing is like him).

2. The *Nusairiyyah* also believe that ‘Alī is higher in rank than the Prophet. They argue that Allah gave ‘Alī exclusive knowledge of the secret whereas the Prophet was only judging the apparent. They fabricated traditions and created events in support of this doctrine of theirs. God is Exalted above their claim.

3. They created a Trinity of ‘Alī, the Meaning, as the Ultimate Secret (Allah?); Muhammad, the Name, as the Manifest Picture; and Salmān al-Farisī as the *Bāb* (Gate to the Meaning). ‘*Ayin*, *Mīm* and *Sīn* are made to symbolize this Code/Combination. This idea seems to be influence of Christian Trinity on the sub-sect or some ancient Syrian pagan belief which made the trio of Sun, Moon and Heaven divine and worshipped them.

4. They believe in Transfiguration or Transmigration of Souls from one body to another. If the soul is righteous it then goes to the Sun, Planet or God; but if it is devilish it enters the body of a woman or devilish person or dirty animals like pig or monkey. One of their theologians explains the idea as meaning that the Faithful transmigrates seven times before taking his place among the stars; and that if a man dies devilish, he is born again Christian or Muslim until he is purified and cleansed of his sins. Those who disbelieve in divinity of ‘Alī are born again in form of dogs, camels, donkeys or

sheep. Thus, neither resurrection nor accountability will take place hereafter; punishment or reward, paradise or hell are in this world.

5. They reproach and curse the *Şahābah*, some Ṣūfīs and scholars of Jurisprudence and all their opponents. Such people benefit from ‘Alī`s providence and worship other than him. They praise Ibnu Maljam, the murderer of ‘Alī, for separating ‘Alī, the divine, from ‘Alī, the human.

They constitute ten percent of the Syrian population today and are also found in Southern Turkey and ‘Aka district in Lebanon.

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

5. Who was the real propagandist of the *Nuşayriyyah*? Discuss their beliefs.

4.4: Summary

This Unit treats the *Saba'iyyah*, *Mukhtāriyyyah*, *Agha Khaniyyah*, *Nuşayriyyah* and the Durūz as constituting heretical groups based on doctrines not only extraneous to Islam but also blasphemous and outrageous. From the foregoing it may be concluded that many obnoxious characters among converts to Islam and others who under the pretext of love for *Ahl al-Bayt* have exploited Shiism. They have introduced their former doctrines into it. Such characters include Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Indians; and those who wanted to carve independent Kingdom or State for themselves. That fire will not burn a Shiite, for instance, was that of the Jews when they say: "*lan tamassanān-nāru illā ayyāman ma'dūdāt*". The doctrines of ***Raj'ah*** (Expected Mahdi) and Second Coming of an *Imām* and Incarnation are Christians. Under the cover of Shiism, transfiguration of souls found among the Brahamas and the Magians found its way. Number Seven enjoys divine importance in the Ismā'īlī system as it does among the old Pythagorians who divided natural phenomena into seven: viz; Allah, Intellect, Soul, Al-Hayula, Form, Time and Place.

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4.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answers to SAEs 1

1. The *Saba'iyyah* was one of the first extremist *Shī'ah* group who were heretical in ideology and perhaps harboured evil intentions against Islam. It was named after Abdullah b Saba'i, the mastermind of the assassination of the third Caliph and one of the first people to pay homage to 'Ali when he was appointed fourth Caliph. He started to weave doctrines that were completely strange to Islam around 'Alī's personality. He alleged that Muhammad will come back to the world and he had as his own slogan, the following statement:

> It is amazing for people to believe that Jesus will come back and to disbelieve in the coming back of Muhammad, whereas God says in the Qur'ān chapter 28 verse 85 that – certainly the one who revealed the Qur'ān on you will return you back to your place.

He also alleged that he saw in the Torah (Taorah) that every Prophet usually had a successor and therefore 'Alī was the successor to Muhammad and as

Muhammad was the best of the Prophets, ‘Alī was the best of the successors as he went to the extent of proclaiming ‘Alī as a prophet. Worst still, he called him ***Juz'un min Allah*** (divine part) or God incarnate. He also claimed that ‘Ali was not killed and likened his situation with that of Jews and Christians' belief about Prophet Isa (ASW) - (Jesus). This Shi'ite group is an extremist group.

Answers to SAEs 2

2. The *Kīsaniyyah or Mukhtāriyyah* is another heretical sub-sect of the *Shī'ah*, which called people to accept Muhammad uncle of ‘Alī, popularly known as al-Hanafiyyah (16 A.H. to 81 A.H.) as the *Imām*. The leader of this sub-sect was al Mukhtār b. Abī Abīd al-Thaqafī nicknamed Kisān, hence the appellation *Kisāniyyah*. This sub-sect is sometimes called *Mukhtāriyyah* which is a title derived from Mukhtār, the proper name of its leader.

i.This leader started talking like a soothsayer imitating the Qur'ān in form and contents in his utterances, ii. he claimed that he was a prophet receiving revelations, iii. he had an ancient chair expensively decorated, which he claimed to be part of ‘Alī's heritage, iv. he carried the chair along with him when he went for war as the Jews used to do with their arch. Al-Mukhtār however met his death in the battle against Abdullah b. Zubayr in 67 A.H. at Kufah.

Answers to SAEs 3

3. *Aghakhāniyyah* was a heterodox Shiite Muslims due to the following; the founder established well-fortified location, training disciples and spreading *Bāṭiniyyah* doctrines, he induced his followers to smoke weeds (*Hashīsh*) and his followers were notorious as ***Hashshāshīn*.** In the Bahrain the *Bāṭiniyyah* were known as ***al-Qarāmiṭah*** (the Qarmatians), a word derived from the name of their leader Hamdān Qarmat, an Iraqi national who claimed to have got the ability to read the stars. The Qarmatians entered Makkah and carried away the Black Stone and kept it in their custody for twenty years.

The *Agha Khāniyyah* was founded by Hasan as-Sabaḥ who was born in Rayy in the 5th Century A.H. He emerged in India and was accused of working for the Fatimids by the vizier of Malik Shah. He thus fled to ‘Alamut in Qazwin and succeeded in raising strong followership and became influential in the region. He was engaged in battles to curb his excessiveness but remained a strong force in their location until the Mongol warriors under their Commander Holako massacred them. The sect's followers in Shām also played prominent role in fighting the Crusaders. Ṣalāhud-Dīn, the Ayyubid

had to fight them till they surrendered when the Muslims also were not safe from their danger. Members scattered all over Syria, Persia, Oman, Zanzibar and India. They were called Khojas in India and they accepted Agha Khan of Bombay as their titular head because Agha Khan himself took Ismā'il, the seventh *Imām* as his ancestor. The Ismāilīs of Persia, India, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Oman and the Arab Gulf now are bāṭinīs. The descendants of Agha Khān in India who regarded himself a descendant of Hasan al-Ṣabaḥ is their acknowledged leader. They are now in peaceful and cordial relations with Muslims.

Answers to SAEs 4

4. The Durūz : The Durūz sect was named after Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl Durzī (d. 411 A.H.); but the adherents call themselves '*Muwaḥḥidūn*' (Unitarians). It is a sub-sect which emerged during the reign of al-Hākim bin Amrillah who claimed divinity, and whom Muhammad Durzī visited in 408 A.H. He later sojourned in Shām concentrating his propaganda on behalf of the ruler among the Jews and the Christians. This group is not an orthodox group since their major doctrine is divinity of their ruler and his second coming at the end of time. The sub-sect has recently published a book entitled *Maṣḥafud-Durūz* (The Durūz Scripture) in which attempt is made to imitate the Qur`ān as did Musaylimah in the past. It is a recent publication but the authour attempted to ascribe it to some early Durūz Imams; he was however exposed by some modern words. The *Durūz* reside today in Lebanon, Baniyas and Mountains of the Hurān Hill usually called Durūz Mountains.

The Bhoras: This is another heretic group. The name, Bhoras, is an ancient Indian word meaning Traders, derives for this Ismā'īlī sub-sect because its early adherents were converts among the Hindu Traders. The sub-sect has its center in India, Pakistan and Southern Yemen. Their main doctrine is the divinity of their *Imām*. They maintain special places for their *Ṣalāt*, which they call "Jamiu Khānah". They pray for the *Isma'īliyyah* hidden *Imām* from among the descendants of Al-Tayyib b. al-Āmir and are thus like idolaters. They take Ka'bah to be symbol of their *Imām*. **T**wo of their scriptures containing biographies of their Propagandists and some of their aphorisms are *Da'ā'imu `l-Islām* and *Al-Ḥaqā'iq*.

Answers to SAEs 5

5. *Al-Nuṣayriyyah* (the Nuṣayrīs)

The founder of *Nuṣayriyyah* was Muhammad ibn Nuṣayr al-Numayrī a follower of al-Hasan al-'Askrī, the eleventh of the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah Imām*s. The real propagandist and author of the *Nuṣayriyyah* doctrines was

al-Hasan ibn Hamdān al-Khusaybī (260-346 A.H.) He stayed in Baghdad and moved from one place to another until he settled finally in Syria in the city of Halab. Later, al-Ladhiqiyyah, on the mountain known by the name of the sub-sect became their main center.

Following are the belief of the Nuşayrīs:

- The pivot of *Nuşayriyyah* doctrine is the divinity of ‘Alī. They believe that God appeared in form of man and ‘Alī was God incarnate. This is wrong since He, the Almighty has said : *laisa kamithlihi shay’un*” (Nothing is like him).

- The *Nusairiyyah* also believe that ‘Alī is higher in rank than the Prophet. They fabricated traditions and created events in support of this doctrine of theirs. God is Exalted above their claim.

- They created a Trinity of ‘Alī, the Meaning, as the Ultimate Secret (Allah?); Muhammad, the Name, as the Manifest Picture; and Salmān al-Farisī as the *Bāb* (Gate to the Meaning) and so on.

- They believe in Transfiguration or Transmigration of Souls from one body to another.

- They reproach and curse the *Şahābah*, some Şūfīs and scholars of Jurisprudence and all their opponents.

They constitute ten percent of the Syrian population today and are also found in Southern Turkey and ‘Aka district in Lebanon.

MODULE 3 *AL – MU'TAZILAH* AND *AL – ASH'ARIYYAH)*
(the Mutazilites and the Ash'arites)

Unit 1: The Emergence of the Mu'tazilites and Their Fundamental Doctrines
Unit 2: The Prominent Mu'tazilites and More of their Views.
Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines
Unit 4: Biography of *al-Ash'arī* and His Short Creed

Unit 1: The Emergence of the *Muʿtazilah* and their Fundamental Principles

CONTENTS

1.1: Introduction
1.2: Learning Outcomes
1.3: Background to the Emergence of the *Muʿtazilah* and their Fundamental
Principles
1.3.1 Origin of the *Mu'tazilah* and their Fundamental Principles
1.3.2 The *Mu 'tazilah* and the Principle of Divine Unity
1.3.3 Divine Justice (Free will and Predestination)
1.3.4 The Promise of Reward and the Threat of Punishment (Divine Justice)
1.3.5 The State between the States of Belief and Unbelief.
1.3.6 To Order the doing of right and Forbid the doing of Wrong.
1.4: Summary
1.5: References/Further Readings
1.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Muʿtazilah* were a movement in Islam which placed the use of reason over revelation on religious matters. Although it was during the time of Hasan al-Başrī that Mutazilism (thorough going rationalization of Islamic beliefs) came to the lime-light the origin of the use of reasoning in religious pursuits can be traced back to an earlier date. The *Ahluṣ-Ṣuffah* (People of the Platform i.e.in the Mosque of the Prophet in Madina) who had been ealier mentioned could be cited as example. When needed, they tried to work out religious doctrines in the light of reason. Perhaps the report that the Prophet Muhammad (S) once met some Companions arguing on the issue of *Qadar* and discouraged them refers to them. These were the people who prepared the ground for the school of Muʿtazilism. The Kharijites and the Shiites are other examples. Although these two sects came into prominence with marked political reasons, they also had theological beliefs. Meanwhile, what is Muʿtazilism and who were the Muʿtazilites? Come along for the answer.

1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) define Muʿtazilism
(ii) trace origin of the *Muʿtazilah* movement.
(iii) enumerate the fundamental doctrines of the Muʿtazilites
(iv) discuss them critically.

1.3: Background to the Emergence of the *Muʿtazilah* and their Fundamental Principles

1.3.1. Origin of the *Mu'tazilah* and their Fundamental Principles

The school of the Qadarites discussed in Modul Two Unit One could be regarded as the real founders of Mu'tazilism. Like the Kharijites and Shiites it had its foundation in the political development of the day. The first man who dared proclaim doctrines of the Qadarites was Ma'bad al-Juhani. He lived in the early days of Umayyads' cruelty, relentless persecution of opponents and ruthless blood-shedding.

Historians report that Ma'bad al-Juhani with 'Ata ibn Yaseer, one of his companions came one day to the celebrated Hasan al-Basri and said: 'O Abu Sa'id, these rulers shed blood of the Muslims and commit grievous sins and say their work are by the decree of Allah'. To this Hasan replied: 'The enemies of God! they are liars.' Thus the first doctrine laid down by the early Mu'tazilites was: Man is accountable for his own evil doings; these should not be ascribed to God.' You have come across this under discussion on the doctrine of *qadar* of the Qadarites. Hence the designation Qadarites given to the early Mu'taziltes who for the same reason were also called the Adalites, that is, the holders of the justice of God. For justice of God can be vouchsafed only by holding man responsible for his actions. Mabad al-Juhani preached this doctrine publicly and was therefore put to death by Hajjāj in 80/699 under orders of Caliph Abdul-Malik.

After Ma'bad al-Juhanī, it was a Copt named Ghaylān Dimashqī, who promulgated similar views. He further added that it was incumbent on every Muslim to urge people to do right actions and to check them from doing wrong. This addition by Ghaylān overtly interfered with and threatened the maintenance of the Umayyad rule. As a consequence he met his death at the hands of Hishām ibn Malik soon after his ascendancy to the Caliphate seat in 105/723.

The deaths of Ma‘bad and Ghaylān put life into their cause. Their teachings became current and exerted an ever-growing influence. Thousands of people came to subscribe to the Mu‘tazilite views and outlook. At this time two great personages born in the same year 80/699 appeared like two stars on the horizon of Mu’tazilism. These two were Wāşil bn ‘Atā and ‘Amr bn’ Ubayd. Both of them were the pupils of Hasan al-Başrī who used to give his lectures in the great mosque of Başrah.

One day when Hasan was busy discussing some problems with his pupils, someone came to him with a question regarding the conflicting standpoints of the Murji’ites and the Wa’idites. The first held that the perpetrator of a grave sin should be reckoned as a Muslim and not labeled a *Kāfir* (unbeliever) and that his case should be left to God. The second, laying more emphasis on the threats in the Qur’ān, maintained that the committer of a mortal sin, having ipso facto deviated from the right path, could not possibly be considered a *Mu’min* (believer). Before Hasan could give a reply, either Wāşil or ‘Amr broke out with the assertion of a middle position, i.e. such a one was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. So Wāşil and ‘Amr left the circle of the master, went to another corner of the mosque and began teaching their own views. Hasan took it ill and said: *i’tazala’annā* (i.e. he has seceded from us). Those who gathered around them came to be known as the *Mu’tazilah,* the Mutazilites.

Mu’tazilism was essentially a movement to interpret the dogmas of religion in terms of reason. The Mu’tazilites were mostly independent thinkers and had quite individualistic views with regard to various religious and philosophical problems. We shall consider here some of their fundamental doctrines. Abu al-Husayn al-Khayyat, a great Mu’tazilite authority, gave five fundamental principles which one claiming to be a Mu’tazilite must subscribe to in their entirety. These are:

(1) Divine unity (*at-Tawḥīd*).
(2) Divine justice (*al-‘adl*).
(3) The promise of reward and the threat of punishment (*al-wa‘d wal-waʿīd*).
(4) The state between states of belief and unbelief (*al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn*).
(5) To order the doing of right and to prohibit the doing or wrong (*al-amr bil-maʿrūf wan-nahy’an al-munkar*).

Self Assessment Exercise (SAEs)

1. Define Mutazilism and trace the origin of the movement.

1.3.2. The *Mu'tazilah* and the Principle of Divine Unity

The doctrines of Divine Unity and Divine Justice are more central to the Mutazilites than the rest of them; hence they preferred the ascription *Ahlut-Tawḥīd wal-ʿAdl* (the people of unity and justice) for themselves. Specifically, they raised the following four issues, each of which has important bearing on the problem of divine unity:

(a) Relation of the attributes of God with His Essence.
(b) Created-ness or Uncreated-ness of the Holy Qur'ān.
(c) Possibility of Vision of God (the Beatific Vision).
(d) Interpretation of the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'ān.

(a) Relation of the attributes of God with His Essence.

The Mu'tazilites explained the divine attributes such as the knowing, the powerful, the living and so on and so forth, as referring to His Being; and not that He possesses the qualities of knowledge, power, life, etc., apart from His essence.

The fear to them was that should the qualities be considered as entities apart from the Divine Being that certainly would amount to polytheism because it will amount to plurality of eternals. Thus the Mu'tazilites reduced God to an absolute unity divested of all qualities. The orthodox, on the other hand, look for nothing less than a personal God. This whole problem of the relation of God's attributes with His essence is entirely above human reason: revelation alone is to guide us.

(b) Created-ness and Uncreated-ness of the Qur'ān.

To the generality of the Muslims the Qur'ān is the word of God revealed to the holy Prophet. Thus the Qur'ān is also called the divine speech or the speech of God (i.e. *Kalām Allāh*). Pious Muslims further hold that the Qur'ān is uncreated and has existed from eternity with God; its revelation to the Prophet, of course, was piece-meal as occasions demanded. The Mu'tazilites very strongly denied the eternity of the Qur'ān on the plea that God alone is eternal. According to them, those who believed in the uncreated-ness of the Qur'ān and make it co-eternal with God take unto themselves two gods and hence are polytheists.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Relate the implications of the Muʿtazilites principles of divine unity to the attributes of God and the concept of the eternity of the Qur'ān.

(c) Possibility of the Beatific Vision of God.

Abu `l-Hudhayl and the majority of other Mu'tazilites maintained: 'We would see God only with our mind's eye, i.e. we would know Him only through the heart.'

The proofs they provided in support of their view on the impossibility of vision of God may be summed up under the following heads:

Proof from the Qur'ān.

(i) Vision comprehendeth Him not but He comprehendeth all vision (Q.vi. 103)

The verse, according to them, is of general application and means that the physical eyes see God neither in this world nor in the next.

(ii) In reply to Moses' supplication: My Lord, show me Thyself so that I may gaze upon Thee' (Q.vii. 143), God said with an emphatic negation: 'Thou wilt not see Me'.

(iii) They asked a greater thing of Moses than that; for they said: 'Show us Allah manifestly'; a storm of lighting seized them for their wrongdoing (iv. 153). Had the people of Moses asked for a possible thing from God, they would not have been called wrongdoers and would not have been consequently overtaken by the storm of lightning.

Proof from the Optical Sciences

The Mu'tazilites maintained that the following conditions were necessary in order to see a thing:

(i) One must possess sound sight.

(ii) The objects to be seen must be in front or opposite to the eye just as a thing to be reflected in a mirror must need to be opposite it.

(iii) It must not be too distant from the eye.

(iv) It must not be too near the eye either.

(v) It must not be too fine to be looked at, i.e. it must be a coloured object or one sufficiently coarse.

In the opinion of the Mu'tazilites, since God as an object of vision does not satisfy the relevant conditions mentioned above, He cannot be seen with bodily eyes.

Proof from the *Ḥadīth*.

As for the saying ascribed to the holy Prophet: 'You will see your Lord as you see the full moon while you will not disagree amongst yourself in regard to His vision' (*Ṭirmidhī*), the Mu'tazilites hold that the tradition in question is of the category of *aḥādī* and not that of *Mutawātir*, i.e. it comes only through a single channel of transmitters and as such is not acceptable when in conflict with an explicit verse of the Qur'ān such as : Vision comprehends Him not

but He comprehends vision'. (vi.103). They, on the other hand, alluded to a saying of Āishah according to which she questioned even the Prophet having seen God here in this world: "He who says the Prophet saw God in person tells a lie' (Bukhārī).

Self Assessment Execise 3 (SAEs)

3. As a corollary from their principle of divine unity the Muʿtazilites denied the Beatific Vision. State their arguemnts.

(d) Interpretation of the Anthropomorphic Verses of the Qur'ān

In the Holy Qur'ān we find many anthropomorphic expressions about God such as the following:

(i) So glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things (Q.34:83).
(ii) That which I have created with My hands (Q.38:75)
(iii) Which swims forth under Our eyes (Q.54:14)
(iv) And the contenance of thy Lord would abide full of majesty and glory (Q.55:27).
(v) The Merciful God has seated himself on His throne (Q.20:5).
(vi) Thou shall see the angels circling the throne uttering the praises of their Lord (Q.39:75).

As may be expected an inference may be gathered easily from their view of the beatific vision, the Muʿtazilites naturally interpreted the anthropomorphic statements in the Holy Qur'ān such as the face, the hand and the eyes of God or His sitting upon the throne as merely metaphorical expressions. They repudiated literalism of all types in order to maintain the pure unity of God. The Mutazilites hence applied the principle of interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the verses of the holy Qur'ān. The Muʿtazilites also denied the Prophets Ascension to the heavens in the physical sense.

Self Assessment Execise 4 (SAEs)

4. The Muʿtazilites attitude towards the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'ān was negative. Expatiate on this statement.

1.3.3 Divine Justice (Free will and Predestination)

The orthodox maintain that there can be no necessity for God even to do justice. He is absolutely free in what He does. Good and evil have their nature by God's will and man can know them only through God's injunctions and commands. The Muʿtazilites opposed this view by holding that good and evil can be known through reasoning.

Al-Nazzam, in particular, taught that God can do nothing to a creature either in this world or in the next that would not be for the creautre's own good and as justice may demand. He does not even have power to do it. It is important to note that according to the Holy Qur'ān, God is essentially just and righteous. Verses of the Holy Qur'ān quoted by the Mu 'tazilites to support their views are as the following :

(i) God is not unjust to His servants (Q.12:10; 40: 31).

(ii) Lo, Allah is never unjust to mankind in anything (Q.10:44).

(iii) God truly will not wrong anybody the weight of an atom and if there be any deed He will repay it (Q.21:47).

(iv) They further maintained that the Holy Qur'ān says: God does not impose (any task) on the soul but to the extent of its capacity. (Q.2:286).

Thus like the Qadarites, both man's freedom and God's justice must go together. Man should be considered responsible for his actions; otherwise God will not be justified in punishing the sinners.

Self Assessment Execise 5 (SAEs)

5. Articulate the stands of the Muʿtazilites as against those of the Orthodox in regards to divine justice.

1.3.4 The Promise of Reward and the Threat of the Punishment

This doctrine is related to that of divine justice. Since God is just, He should punish the sinners and reward the virtuous in life after death. Has not God himself given the promise of reward and the threat of punishment in the holy Qur'ān?

(1) Allah has promised the believers, men and women, Gardens (Q.9:72).

(2) And lo! The wicked verily will be in hell (Q.82:14).

(3) Whosoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whosoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it (Q.99: 7-8).

The Mu'tazilites maintain that it is obligatory on God to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked and that He cannot do otherwise. Contrary to this, the Orthodox and particularly the Ash'arites believe that reward and punishment are entirely God's grace. He can reward whom He wills and punish whom He wills. It is certain, that He will favour the righteous and punish the wicked as He has promised to do so; but no consideration can bind His discretion and compel Him to do this or that. To impose

compulsion on Him is to reduce Him to a dependent being or even to a machine, which must move and act without any choice of its own. There will be no difference between God and a courts majistrate whose decisions are guided by a penal code if He is compelled to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked.

On the other hand, according to the Mutazilites, the Qur'ānic promise of reward and threats of punishment cannot go unfulfilled; otherwise God's truthfulness becomes doubtful. God never changes His words and so it is given in the Holy Qur'ān: "There is no changing in the words of Allah" (Q.10:64).

The Orthodox agrees with the Muʿtzilites that the virtuous will go to paradise and the wicket to hell. But, according to the Muʿtazilites, the conclusion is necessary and irresistible. According to the Orthodox, it is only conditional and probable. God is absolutely free to do what He wills. The orthodox insists that, should He so will the virtuous might go to hell or, at least, the wicked to paradise. According to the Mu'tazilites, God's justice would in that case be unpredictable and His justice would loose all meaning.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

6. Explain Muʿtazilites view of divine promise of rewards and theats of punishment.

1.3.5 The State between the States of Belief and Unbelief.

This doctrine, the acceptance of which gave the very name to the Mu'tazilites, was more political than theological in nature. The Muʿtazilites formulated it to express their perception of the Umayyads who were then rulers of the Muslim nation. They submitted that as soon as a man commits a mortal sin he neither remains a believer nor becomes an unbeliever; but occupies a middle position (*manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). Should he die without repentance, he would be condemned to hell-fire, with the only difference that the punishment inflicted upon him would be less severe than that inflicted on an unbeliever. They based this doctrine also on the authority of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*. 'Is he who is a believer like him who is an evildoer? They are not alike' (Q.32:18) Again the holy Prophet is reported to have said: 'He who is not against a mortal sin has no faith, nor is he an unbeliever,'

Self-Assessment Exercise 7 (SAEs)

7. The doctrine of *manzilah bayna manzilatayn* gave birth to

Muʿtazilism. Explain the doctrine briefly.

1.3.6 To Order the doing of right and forbid the doing of Wrong.

This doctrine belongs to the practical theology of the Mu'tazilites. The orthodox also admits the need to urge people to do good and to check them from doing wrong. But the Muʿtazilites considered this incumbent upon every Muslim (*farḍ 'ayn*, i.e. a duty obligatory on the individual). The orthodox on the other hand, holds that it is only a *farḍ kifāyah*, i.e. it would suffice if someone carried out this injunction on behalf of the community. Because of this doctrine the Mu'tazilites deemed it necessary to spread their creed not only in words but also – though this was quite contrary to the spirit of Islam- by force of state authority, under the glorious patronage of al-Ma'mūn, this doctrine of the Mu'tazilites led to the institution of inquisition *miḥnah* against all those who did not subscribe to their religious view, particularly that of the createdness of the Qur'ān.

Al-Ma'mūn issued a letter of authority to all the *Qāḍī*s of the State to test the beliefs of officials with regard to the created-ness of the Qur'ān. The Caliph ordered that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon those who even refused to take the test. This naturally led to very strong feeling against Mu'tazilism and was consequently one of the reasons for its downfall.

Self-Assessment Exercise 8 (SAEs)

8. Discuss the extent to which 'to order the doing of right and forbid the doing of evil' is fundamental in Mu'tazilism.

1.4: **Summary**

According to the Mu'tazilites, both reason and revelation are the criteria of knowledge; and therefore they must be in proper harmony. In the event of any inconsistency, revelation should be tested by reason. Thus the Mu'tazilites lay emphasis upon reason than revelation. Religion in their opinion, should be based on logical truth so as to become universally acceptable. The Mutazilites believed that God's attributes are identical with His essence.The face, hands and eyes of God; and His settling on His Throne should be taken in metaphorical senses. Man has free-will and he is the author of his actions. He will be rewarded according to the merits of his deeds; and punished according to their demerits. They denied the possibility

of the Beatific Vision of God. They agree with the idea of intercession of the Prophet on behalf of the guilty Muslims on the Day of Judgment.

1.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy Qur'ān with English Translation.

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1.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answer to SAEs 1

1. Mu'tazilism was essentially a movement that interprets the dogmas of religion in terms of reason. They were mostly independent thinkers and had quite individualistic views with regard to various religious and philosophical problems.

The movement came to been through Wāşil bn 'Atā and 'Amr bn' Ubayd, both of them were the pupils of Hasan al-Başrī who used to give his lectures in the great mosque of Başrah. One day when Hasan was busy discussing some problems with his pupils, someone came to him with a question regarding the conflicting standpoints of the Murji'ites and the Wa'idites. The first held that the perpetrator of a grave sin should be reckoned as a Muslim and not labeled a *Kāfir* (unbeliever) and that his case should be left to God. The second, laying more emphasis on the threats in the Qur'ān, maintained that the committer of a mortal sin, having ipso facto deviated from the right path, could not possibly be considered a *Mu'min* (believer). Before Hasan could give a reply, either Wāşil or 'Amr broke out with the assertion of a

middle position, i.e. such a one was neither a believer nor an unbeliever. So Wāşil and ‘Amr left the circle of the master, went to another corner of the mosque and began teaching their own views. Hasan took it ill and said: *i’tazala’annā* (i.e. he has seceded from us). Those who gathered around them came to be known as the *Mu’tazilah,* the Mutazilites.

Answer to SAEs 2

2. The Mutazilites preferred the ascription *Ahlut-Tawḥīd wal-ʿAdl* (the people of unity and justice) for themselves. Specifically, they raised the four issues, each of which has important bearing on the problem of divine unity as follow:

(a) Relation of the attributes of God with His Essence.
(b) Created-ness or Uncreated-ness of the Holy Qur’ān.
(c) Possibility of Vision of God (the Beatific Vision).
(d) Interpretation of the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur’ān.

By divine unity, they mean that every attribute of God should not be considered as possession of God. For example, attributes such as knowing, the powerful, the living and so on and so forth, as referring to His Being; and not that He possesses the qualities of knowledge, power, life, etc., apart from His essence. The fear to them was that should the qualities be considered as entities apart from the Divine Being that certainly would amount to polytheism because it will amount to plurality of eternals. Thus, the Mu’tazilites reduced God to an absolute unity divested of all qualities. The implication of this is that God has no quality or possess any and that all attributes are referring to His Divine Being therefore these qualities are creatures of God if it is accepted that they are possessed by God as belief in the possession of these attributes also indicates polytheism since God is Eternal and nothing should also be eternal, therefore the Holy Qur’an is also a creature of God since God’s speech is not a quality of God and cannot be co-eternal with God. The orthodox, on the other hand, look for nothing less than a personal God as believing otherwise will lead to having two gods and hence the act of polytheism. This whole problem of the relation of God’s attributes with His essence is entirely above human reason: revelation alone is to guide us.

Answer to SAEs 3

3. Abu `l-Hudhayl and the majority of other Mu’tazilites maintained God could only be seen with mind’s eye, i.e. He would be known only through the heart. The proofs they provided in support of their view on the impossibility of vision of God may be summed up from the Qur’an, optical sciences and *Hadith* of the Prophet (SAW).

Answer to SAEs 4

4. There are many anthropomorphic expressions about God in the Qur'an, such as the Q.34:83, Q.38:75, Q.54:14, Q.55:27, Q.20:5 and Q.39:75. But the Muʿtazilites naturally interpreted the anthropomorphic statements in the Holy Qur'ān such as the face, the hand and the eyes of God or His sitting upon the throne as merely metaphorical expressions. They repudiated literalism of all types in order to maintain the pure unity of God. The Mutazilites hence applied the principle of interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the verses of the holy Qur'ān. The Muʿtazilites also denied the Prophets Ascension to the heavens in the physical sense.

Answer to SAEs 5

5. The orthodox maintain that God is absolutely free in whatever He does including justice and as such there can be no necessity for Him even to do justice. They also maintain that both good and evil have their nature by God's will and man can know them only through God's injunctions and commands. The Muʿtazilites on the other hand opposed these views by holding that God can do nothing to a creature either in this world or in the next that would not be for the creautre's own good and as justice may demand and that good and evil can be known through reasoning. It is important to note that according to the Holy Qur'ān, God is essentially just and righteous.

Verses of the Holy Qur'ān quoted by the Mu 'tazilites to support their views are; Q.12:10; 40: 31, Q.10:44, Q.21:47 and Q.2:286. Thus, like the Qadarites, both man's freedom and God's justice must go together. Man should be considered responsible for his actions; otherwise, God will not be justified in punishing the sinners.

Answer to SAEs 6

6. The Promise of Reward and the Threat of the Punishment doctrine is related to that of divine justice. Since God is just, He should punish the sinners and reward the virtuous in life after death. God Himself has given the promise of reward and the threat of punishment in the holy Qur'ān 9:72, 82:14, 99: 7-8 and others. But to the Mu'tazilites, it is obligatory on God to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked and that He cannot do otherwise. Contrary to this, the Orthodox and particularly the Ash'arites believe that reward and punishment are entirely God's grace. He can reward whom He wills and punish whom He wills.

On the other hand, according to the Mutazilites, the Qur'ānic promise of reward and threats of punishment cannot go unfulfilled; otherwise God's truthfulness becomes doubtful. God never changes His words and so it is

given in the Holy Qur'ān: "There is no changing in the words of Allah" (Q.10:64).

The Orthodox agrees with the Muʿtzilites that the virtuous will go to paradise and the wicket to hell. But, according to the Muʿtazilites, the conclusion is necessary and irresistible. According to the Orthodox, it is only conditional and probable. God is absolutely free to do what He wills. The orthodox insists that, should He so will the virtuous might go to hell or, at least, the wicked to paradise. According to the Mu'tazilites, God's justice would in that case be unpredictable and His justice would loose all meaning.

Answer to SAEs 7

7. The Mu'talism submitted that as soon as a man commits a mortal sin he neither remains a believer nor becomes an unbeliever; but occupies a middle position (*manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). Should he die without repentance, he would be condemned to hell-fire, with the only difference that the punishment inflicted upon him would be less severe than that inflicted on an unbeliever. They based this doctrine also on the authority of the Qur'ān 32 verse 18 and the *Ḥadīth* where the holy Prophet is reported to have said: 'He who is not against a mortal sin has no faith, nor is he an unbeliever,'

However, this doctrine, the acceptance of which gave the very name to the Mu'tazilites, was more political than theological in nature. The Muʿtazilites formulated it to express their perception of the Umayyads who were then rulers of the Muslim nation.

Answer to SAEs 8

8. The need to urge people to do good and to check them from doing wrong is also supported by the orthodox. But the Muʿtazilites considered this incumbent upon every Muslim (*farḍ 'ayn*, i.e. a duty obligatory on the individual). While the orthodox on the other hand, holds that it is only a *farḍ kifāyah*, i.e. it would suffice if someone carried out this injunction on behalf of the community. Because of this doctrine the Mu'tazilites deemed it necessary to spread their creed not only in words but also by force of state authority, under the glorious patronage of al-Ma'mūn. This doctrine of the Mu'tazilites led to the institution of inquisition *miḥnah* against all those who did not subscribe to their religious view, particularly that of the createdness of the Qur'ān. Al-Ma'mūn issued a letter of authority to all the *Qāḍī*s of the State to test the beliefs of officials with regard to the created-ness of the Qur'ān. The Caliph ordered that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon those who even refused to take the test. This naturally led to very strong feeling against Mu'tazilism and was consequently one of the reasons for its downfall.

Unit 2: The Prominent *Mu'tazilah* and More of Their Views

CONTENTS

2.1: Introduction
2.2: Learning Outcomes
2.3: Background to the Prominent *Mu'tazilah* and More of Their Views
2.3.1: Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.)
2.3.2: Abu `l-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D)
2.3.3: Ibrahim ibn Sayyar A `n-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.)
2.3.4: Amr ibn Baḥr (called al-Jāhiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D)
2.3.5: Bishr-Ibn-Mutamir (d. 848 A.D.)
2.3.6: Abu 'Alī Al-Jubbā'ī (b. 235/849)
2.3.7: More of the Mutazilite Beliefs
2.4: Summary
2.5: References/Further Readings
2.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

2.1: INTRODUCTION

The renowned Mu'tazilites were Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.), Abul-Hudhayl al-`Allāf (d. 857 A.D), An-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.), al-Jāhiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D), Bishr-Ibn-Mutamir (d. 848 A.D.) , Mu'ammar ibn 'Abbād, As-Sulamī, Thumāmah ibn al-Ashras, Abu 'Alī Al-Jubbā'ī (b. 235/849). The details of their views are discussed in this unit.

2.2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) identify the renowned Mu'tazilites
(ii) state the theological views of each of them
(iii) appraise the validity of such view-points.

2.3: Background to the Prominent *Mu'tazilah* and More of Their Views

2.3.1. Wāşil ibn al-'Aţā (d. 753 A.D.}

Wāşil ibn 'Aţā was a Persian disciple of al-Hasan al-Başrī. He differed from his teacher as to the question whether a believer, after he had committed a *kabīrah* (major sin), still deserved to be called a believer. Wāşil held that such a person could neither be called a believer nor an unbeliever but should be regarded as occupying a middle position between the two, (*manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). He withdrew to a corner of the mosque to expound his own views to his fellow students. His teacher, al-Hasan al-Başrī remarked, *'i'tazala 'anā*. (He has decamped or seceded from us). Consequent of this remark he is called Mu'tazilite and his school Mu'tazilism. His other views are that:

1. The attributes of God cannot be considered to be separate from His essence.
2. Prophet Muhammad was the author of the Qur'ān under divine influences.
3. Reason is the criterion of knowledge and it is higher than tradition and revelation.
4. Man has free will; so he is responsible for his actions.
5. God is just and cannot act arbitrarily.
6. The Muslim who commits a grave sin occupies a position between that of infidel and a Muslim.
7. Right and wrong cannot be referred to the will of God.
8. The Muslims who fought on the side of 'Alī and those who stood against him cannot both be right as was suggested by some theologians. One party must be wrong and the other must be right.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Who was Wāşil ibn al-'ţā? Enumerate his theological views.

2.3.2. Abul-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D)

He lived about a hundred years. He is considered as one of the greatest scholars of the earliest Mu'tazilite thinkers. He was gifted with art of delivering speech through which he converted many non-Muslims to Islam. He wrote many works but most of them are lost. He differed from other Mu'tazillites including his teacher Wāşil ibn 'Aţā in a number of disputed points. His views in brief are:

1. He recognizes Divine Attributes as not in the essence of God but as identical with His essence.
2. God's will to create is creation. His will is not external to Him as He is absolute Unity. His will to create is quite distinct and different from the will of created objects.
3. Man has free will but only in this world. He has no activities either in hell or heaven in the hereafter. Everything there shall be done by the divine decree. Thus man is not free in the next world to come.
4. The world has a beginning and must have an end. All motions must come to
   a close of everlasting rest.
5. Man is mortal, he must die in definite hour; he cannot avoid death.
6. Man is rational, it is his duty to reflect and know God, Those who fail to do
   so deserve punishment.

7. Divine mercy protects men and women from committing sins.
8. Man's knowledge comes to him from God; partly through revelation and partly through the light of Nature.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Discuss the contributions of Abul-Hudhayl al -`Allāf as a prominent Mu'tazilite.

2.3.3: Ibrahim ibn Sayyar An-Nazzām (d. c. 835-845 A.D.)

Abu Isħāq Ibrahim ibn Sayyār called al-Nazzām was a renowned theologian, philosopher, and prolific author. He was brought up at Başra but spent the latter part of his life at Baghdad where he died. He was one of the most interesting figures in the culture of the Abbasid period. He studied under Abul-Hudhyl al-'Allāf and afterwards established his own independent school. God cannot be compared to anything; He is above everything. The office of the Prophet is not restricted to any nation but open to all. His views, in brief, are:

1. God cannot do evil because He Himself is not evil. Evil is repugnant with His nature. He can do only that which He knows to be best for His creatures. He can do only good things in this world as well as in the next world.
2. By the act of mental reflection and self-study man can know God and distinguish between what is right and what is wrong without seeking help from revelation.
3. Creation is an act performed once and for all but various specimens are being manifested in time. Thus every thing to be in future exists hidden in nature.
4. Reason helps us to attain the knowledge of God and morality.
5. The miracle of the Qur'ān lies in its teaching and not in its beauty of style.

2.3.4. Amr ibn Baḥr (called al-Jāḥiz (d. c. 868 or 877 A.D)

Jāḥiz real name was 'Amr ibn Baḥr. He was one of the leading pupils of al-Nazzām. His teacher described him as the encyclopedic Jāḥiz of al-Basra. He was a great littérateur, philosopher, theologian and a writer of repute. The orthodox Muslims regarded him a freethinker.

He did not believe in speculative deduction. His system was empirical and it was mainly based on experiment and historical facts. His views in brief, are:

1. He believed matter to be eternal. (i.e. World has no beginning)
2. God has no form. So His knowledge is impossible to attain by man.

3. God is good and just. He cannot be the cause of evils.
4. Good and evil are connected with the man. Man is responsible for good and evil.
5. A Muslim who is not intellectually developed to reflect on God and His creation and yet believes God as his creator and follows His Prophet is not to blame.

2.3.5: Bishr-Ibn-Mu‘tamir (d. 848 A.D.)

Bishr ibn Mu‘tamir discussed mainly the problem of free will. Man has free will and he is responsible for his action. But if he is forced to act in a certain way against his own will how he is going to be held responsible was a grave question with Bishr. He gave a good deal of thought over the question determining the moral value of action. The world is a place of soul-making. The presence of evils and suffering does not imply God inability in the making of a better world. God could have made a better world but he did not. Freedom of will necessitated a world like this. God created the universe with a definite purpose. So, He has given man free will and revelation. There are two ways open to man: good and evil. He can choose either of the two by exercise of his free will. Thus, the presence of evil provides man with a chance of self-development and soul-making. His views are:

1. The infant should not be punished, as they cannot make use of free will.
2. The infidel should be held responsible for their activities as they are endowed with the faculty of reason.
3. There are laws of nature and man should discover them by exercising reason.
4. Man who could not meet a Prophet or did not get any chance to have any knowledge of revelation is not unfit to lead a peaceful life provided that he follows the light of nature.

2.3.6: Abū ‘Ali Al-Jubbā’ī (b. 235/849)

Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbāī was born in 235/849 at Jubba, a town in Khuzistan. He belonged to the later Mu‘tazilites. He was the teacher of Abul-Hasan al-Ash‘arī with whom he had discussion in respect of the Theory of the Salutary; that the wise will always do what is salutary (*al-ṣalāḥ wal-aṣlaḥ*) and good, and that God’s wisdom always keeps in view what is salutary for His servant; therefore He cannot be cruel to them. He cannot bring to effect evil deeds. He cannot renounce that which is salutary. He cannot ask His servants to do that which is impossible.

Another report says that al-Jubbāī asked *Imām* al-Ash‘arī about the meaning of obedience to which the *Imām* replied that obedience is assent to a command and then asked for al-Jubbāī `s own opinion in the matter. Al-

Jubbāī said: the essence of obedience is agreement to the will, and whoever fulfills the will of another, obeys him." The *Imām* answered; "according to this, one must conclude that God is obedient to His servant if He fulfils his will. Holding this view is blasphemous. For if God is obedient to His servant, then He must be subject to him, but God is above this.

Further, al-Jubbāī was of the opinion that the names of God are subject to the regular rules of grammar. He therefore considered it possible to derive a name for Him from every deed which He performs contrary to the view of the majority that the attributes of God are *tawqīfī* (i.e. restricted to the testamentary ones). On this, *Imām* al-Ash'arī said: "according to this view, God should be named the producer of pregnancy in women; because he creates pregnancy. This heresy of yours is worse than that of the Christians in calling God the father of Jesus, even though they do not hold that He produced pregnancy in Mary."

The following are other notable views of al-Jubbāī:

1. Like other Mu'tazilites, he denies the Divine Attributes which subsists besides his essence. Neither does he believe in "states" as proposed by his son, i. e. to say that God is all-hearing and all-seeing really means that God is alife and there is no defect of any kind in Him. The attributes of hearing and seeing in God originate at the time of the origination of what is seen and what is heard.
2. He regards the world as originated and the will of God as the cause of its being originated. Like other Mu'tazilites he also thought that the will of God too is something originated.
3. The speech of God is composed of letters and sounds and God creates it in somebody. The speaker is He Himself and not the body in which it subsists. The Speech is necessarily something originated. Therefore the speech of God is a thing originated and not eternal.
4. He denies the beatific vision; for that is impossible because whatever is not physical cannot fulfill the condition of vision.
5. He equally agrees with other Mu'tazilites regarding the knowledge of good and evil, and the destiny of those who commit grave sins. With them, he holds that man is the author of his own actions and that it lies in his power to produce good or evil or commit sins and wrong and that it is compulsory for God to punish the sinner and reward the obedient.
6. In the matter of Imamate, al-Jubbāī supports the belief of the Sunnīs viz: the appointment of an *Imām* is to be founded on the consensus.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

3. Where does al-Jubbāī agree or differ from other Mu'tazillah?

2.3.7: More of Beliefs of the *Mu'tazilah*

The following is the summary of some more beliefs of the Mu'tazilites:

(i) Denial of punishment and reward to be meted out to the dead in the grave and the questioning by Angel Munkar and Nakīr.

(ii) Denial of the indication of the Day of Judgement; Gog and Magog (Yājūj and Mājūj) and of the appearance of the anti-christ (al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāh)

(iii) Some Mu'tazilites believe in the concrete reality of balance (*al-Mīzān*) for weighing actions on the Day of Judgment. Some say that it is impossible for it to be a reality and think that mention made in the Qur'ān of the *Mīzān* means 'only that full justice will be done on the day of judgment.

(iv) The Mu'tzilites also deny the existence of the recording angels called *kirāman kātibīn* in the Holy Qur'ān. The reason they gave for this is that God is well aware of all the deeds of His servants. Thus the recording Angels are dispensable.

(v) The Mu'tazilites also denied the physical existence of (*al-ḥawđ*) the pond and (*aş-şirāṭ*) the bridge. Further, they will not admit that paradise and hell exist now but they will exist on the Judgement Day.

(vi) They deny the miracles of saints; for if admitted, they would be mixed up with those of the Prophets and cause confusion.

(vii) The Mu'tazilites also denied the ascension (*al-miʿrāj*) of the Prophet of Islam because its proof is based on a testimony of individual traditions which cannot necessitate any act or belief; but they do not deny the Holy Prophet's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (*al-Isrā'*).

(viii) As Divine decree cannot be altered, supplications served no purpose for one gains nothing by them because if the objects for which prayers are offered is in conformity with destiny it is needless to ask for it. And if the object conflicts with destiny it is impossible to secure.

(ix) They recognized, the possibility of resurrection of the body, as well as paradise and its sensuous pleasure, and Hell and its bodily torments.

Self Assessment Exercise

4. List five theological views of the *Mu'tazillah* which appear to be at variant to disagree with genral Islamic creeds.

2.4: Summary

The Mu‘tzilites were a group of rationalists who judged all Islamic beliefs by reason. They hardly realized the fact that reason like any other faculty with which man is endowed has its limitations and cannot be expected to comprehend reality in all its details. Meanwhile the Mu‘tazilites deemed it necessary to spread their creed by force of state authority, under the glorious patronage of al-Ma’mūn. This led to the institution of inquisition *miḥnah* by Al-Ma’mūn who issued a letter of authority to all the Qādīs of the state to test the beliefs of officials with regard to the created-ness of the Qur’ān. The Caliph commanded that the penalty of death should be inflicted upon those who even refused to take the test. This naturally led to very strong feeling against Mu‘tazilism and was consequently one of the reasons for its downfall. By the middle of the 3rd hijrah century corresponding to middle of the 9th in the Christian era many Mu’tazilites had become prominent. Their inquiries in which they gave preference to reason over revelation cut across theological issues such as God and His Attributes, predestination and freewill, Eternity and Createdness of the world and the Qur’ān, consequence of grave sin and Miracle. They also touched on doctrines relating to belief in the unseen and what happens in life after death.

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2.6 : Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Possibel Answers to SAE 1:

1. Wāşil ibn al-‘Aţā (d. 753 A.D.) was a Persian disciple of al-Hasan al-Başrī. Who differed from his teacher as to the question whether a believer, after he had committed a *kabīrah* (major sin), still deserved to be called a believer. He opined that such a person could neither be called a believer nor an unbeliever but should be regarded as occupying a middle position between the two, (*manzilah bayna manzilatayn*). Because he withdrew to a corner of the mosque to expound his own views to his fellow students, his teacher, al-Hasan al-Başrī remarked, *'i‘tazala ‘anā*. (He has decamped or seceded from

us). Consequent of this remark he is called Mu'tazilite and his school Mu'tazilism. His other views are that:

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- Man has free will; so he is responsible for his actions.
- God is just and cannot act arbitrarily.
- The Muslim who commits a grave sin occupies a position between that of infidel and a Muslim.
- Right and wrong cannot be referred to the will of God.
- The Muslims who fought on the side of 'Alī and those who stood against him cannot both be right as was suggested by some theologians. One party must be wrong and the other must be right.

Possibel Answers to SAE 2

2. Abul-Hudhayl al -`Allāf (d. 857 A.D) lived about a hundred years. He is considered as one of the greatest scholars of the earliest Mu'tazilite thinkers. He was gifted with art of delivering speech through which he converted many non-Muslims to Islam. He wrote many works but most of them are lost. He differed from other Mu'tazillites including his teacher Wāşil ibn 'Aţā in a number of disputed points. His views in brief are:

- He recognizes Divine Attributes as not in the essence of God but as identical with His essence.
- God's will to create is creation. His will is not external to Him as He is absolute Unity. His will to create is quite distinct and different from the will of created objects.
- Man has free will but only in this world. He has no activities either in hell or heaven in the hereafter. Everything there shall be done by the divine decree. Thus man is not free in the next world to come.
- The world has a beginning and must have an end. All motions must come to
  a close of everlasting rest.
- Man is mortal, he must die in definite hour; he cannot avoid death.
- Man is rational, it is his duty to reflect and know God, Those who fail to do
  so deserve punishment.
- Divine mercy protects men and women from committing sins.
- Man's knowledge comes to him from God; partly through revelation and partly through the light of Nature.

Unit 3: Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines

CONTENTS

3.1: Introduction
3.2: Learning Outcomes
3.3: Background to Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines
2.3.1 Origin and Fundamental Principles of al-*Ash'ariyyah*
3.3.2: Attributes of God and Their Relation with His Essence
3.3.3 Created-ness or Uncreated-ness of the Holy Qur'ān
3.3.4 Possibility of the Beatific Vision.
3.3.5 God's Seating Himself upon the Throne
3.3.6. Free – Will
3.4: Summary
3.5: References/Further Readings
3.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Ash'arism is the name of a theological school of thought in Islam that surfaced during the 4th -5th /10th – 11th centuries. It was "an effort not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the theological teachings of the religion. "It laid the foundation of Sunnism (Orthodoxy) putting divine revelation above reason. Its origin and fundamental doctrines are presented for you in this Unit.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) define Ash'arism
(ii) trace origin of the Ash 'arites movement.
(iii) enumerate the fundamental doctrines of the Ash 'arites
(iv) discuss them critically.

3.3: Background to Ash'arism and Its Fundamental Doctrines

3. 1. Origin and Fundamental Principles of al-*Ash'ariyyah* (Ash'arism)

A'sharism is a departure from a system of purely rationalistic theology to reliance upon the word of God (Qur'ān), the Tradition (*Ḥadīth*) and the usage (*Sunnah*) of the practice of the Holy Prophet and the pattern of life of early Muslim *Ummah* (*salaf*).

At first, it was only a gradual and unconscious shifting of attitude. Afterwards the tendency of human mind to ascribe broad movements to single man asserted itself and the whole was attributed to the name of Abul-Hasan ʻAlī bn Ismāʻīl al-Ashʻarī (d.c. 330/945). It is true that with his efforts the change became generally felt, but it had already been long in progress. As a matter of fact, many schools of theology, similar to that of al-Ashʻarī, arose simultaneously in different countries, e.g. the Zahirites' school in Spain, the Ṭaḥāwī's school in Egypt, and al-Māturidīs school in Samarqanda.

Al-Ashʻarī's School superseded them all and flourished because it had among its adherents and exponents such able thinkers as al-Bāqilānī, *Imām* al-Haramayn, Al-Ghazzālī, Fakhrud-Dīn ar-Rāzī, etc, etc.

The fundamental doctrines in which the Ashʻarites vehemently refuted the Mu 'tazilites may be summed up as follows:

(1) God's attributes are real and separate entities from him.
(2) The Glorious Qur'ān is uncreated; i. e. eternal;
(3) Possibility of the Beatific Vision.
(4) God's seating himself on the Throne.
(5) Freedom of will.
(6) Divine law/Revelation is the way to acquisition of compulsory knowledge.
(7) The world is originated not eternal.
(8) Faith is conviction; work is only complimentary to faith.
(9) God is not compelled to do anything
(10) Reward and Punishment, sending of Messengers and Beatific vision of Divine Being are in the category of possible matters.
(11) God wills good and evil.
(12) Non - voluntary deeds of man are in accordance with *qaḍā'* and *qadar*.
(13) God creates man's voluntary deeds.
(14) Only Prophets are infallible.
(15) The questioning, joy and punishment in the grave are real.
(16) Resurrection will be both in body and soul.
(17) Intercession for the grave sinners are real.
(18) Paradise and Hell exist perpetually.
(19) Imamate is not an essential pillar of Religion.

We hereby give the Ash'arites' arguments on some of the principles in some details.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Give a brief account of the origin of Ashʻarism and enumerate its fundamental doctrines.

3.3.2 Attributes of God and Their Relation with His Essence

(i) The Asharites admitted that God has qualities but with the qualifications of *mukhālafah lil-ḥawādith* and *bilā kayfa walā tashbih*, i. e. the qualities and attributes ascribed to God must be understood to be inapplicable to human beings and so we should 'not ask how and draw comparisons'. Terms used for human beings must have quite different meaning when applied to God. God's attributes not only defer to those of mankind in degree but they defer in their whole nature. Expressions or ideas regarding God should be divested of all human elements, according to the Asharite principle of *tanzīh.*

(ii) Al-Ash ‘arī is reported to have refuted Abul-Hudhayl ‘Allāf's identification of God's attributes with His essence in the following manner: Abul-Hudhayl ‘Allāf says that God's knowledge is God, and so he makes God knowledge. He must be asked to invoke knowledge instead of God, both being identical, and say in his prayers: "O knowledge, forgive me". He made this remark in all seriousness.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Discuss the Asharites’ view on the relation between the attributes of God and His essence.

3.3.3. Createdness or Uncreatedness of the Holy Qur’ān

(i) The Orthodox Ash‘arites very strongly upheld the eternity and the uncreated-ness of the Qur’ān. They based their view, not on Jewish or Christian doctrine of the Logos, as some of the Orientalists and even the Mu’tazilites have alleged, but on the verses of the holy Qur’ān such as:

(a) The command is God's first and last' (Q.30. 4), that is the command which indeed is through God's word (*Kalām Allāh*) is eternal and uncreated.

(b) Are not the creation and the command His?' (Q.5:5). They say: Here God speaks of the command as something other than the act of creation which, according to the Ash'arites, implies that God's command does not belong to the category of created things. Further, God's command, by its very nature, is through His word or His speech; hence *kalām Allāh* or the Qur'ān is uncreated.

(c) God says: 'Our word to a thing when we intend it is only that We say to it, "Be" and it is (*kun fayakūn*). Al-Ash'arī argued, if the Qur'ān were supposed to be created, 'the word 'Be' must have been uttered to it before it could have come to existence. If God should

say 'Be" to the Qur'ān which is itself the 'word of God' a word will be said to another word. From the very logic of this position it would become necessary that a word should be uttered to another word for the latter to come into being. Thus one word would depend on another and the other upon next and so on and so forth to an infinite regression which, according to the Ash'arites, is unthinkable and impossible. Thus by reducing supposition to an absurdity, they claimed to have proved that the Qur'ān is uncreated.

(ii) The Mu'tazilites made the allegation that the Asharites, by preaching the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān, were advocating the Christian idea of Logos and tripping into *shirk,* i. e. polytheism. They argued that, should Ash'arites insist upon the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān they would make it co-eternal with God and thus teach that He has His partner co-existent with Him from eternity.

Interestingly enough, the Ash'arites made a similar charge against the Mu'tazilites and called them 'the polytheists of the first order". They argued that whosoever insists on the created-ness of the Qur'ān comes very close to favouring the view of the infidels that the Qur'ān was a product of Prophet's own mind. The Ash'arites alluded to a verse of the holy Qur'ān in which God has spoken of the polytheists' belief about the Qur'ān that 'it is merely the word of a mortal' (Q.74: 25).

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Examine the polemics between the Asharites and the Mu'tazilites on the problem of the eternity of the Qur'ān.

3.3.4. Possibility of the Beatific Vision.

The Asharites advanced the following proofs in support of their view about the possibility of Beatific Vision even in the physical sense:

(A) Proof from the Qur'ān. References were made to the following verses of the Qur'ān in support of their position:

(i) "That day will faces be splendid, looking towards their Lord". (Q.75: 22, 23). The possibility of Beatific Vision is clearly indicated herein, according to the Ash 'arites, as a gift which would be granted by God to the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.

(ii) He, Moses said: "O my Lord, show me thyself so that I may gaze upon Thee". (Q. 7:143). Al-Ash'arī contended that had the vision of God been impossible of realization, Moses would not have asked for it. Moses was an Apostle of God

and thus free from sin or gross error. How could he ask for an absurd and impossible thing?

(B) Proof from the *Ḥadīth*. The Asharites called the attention of the Mu'tazilites to the following saying of the Prophet in which, in reply to a question about the possibility of seeing God on the Day of Resurrection, he is reported to have said: "You will see your Lord as you see the full moon while you will not disagree among yourselves"

(C) Proof from Logic. The logical arguments in favour of Beatific Vision
are listed below:

(i) God can show us every thing that exists. Therefore he can show Himself to us.

(ii) He who sees things sees himself. God sees things. Therefore God sees Himself.

(iii) He who sees himself can make himself seen. God sees Himself. Therefore He can make Himself seen.

(iv) The Highest good is realizable in the highest world. The Beatific Vision is the highest good. Therefore Beatific Vision is realizable in the highest world. Al-Ash'arī asserted that those who denied the **B**eatific Vision of God reduced God to a mere philosophical abstraction and even to a nonentity.

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Explain the views of the Ash 'arites on the Beatific Vision.

3.3.5. God's Seating Himself upon the Throne.

From the following verses of the Qur'ān it was quite clear to the Ash'arites that God is seated on His throne high up in the heavens:

(i) The Merciful is seated on the throne (Q.20:4)

(ii) The good word rises up to Him (Q.35:11)

(iii) God took him (Jesus) up to Him (Q.4:156).

(iv) Hereafter shall they come up to Him (Q.19:95)

(v) What! Are you sure that He Who is in the heaven will not cleave the earth beneath you? (Q.67:16)

(vi) And thou shall see the Angels circling around the throne uttering the praises of their Lord (Q.30:74-75)

These verses of the Qur'ān were further corroborated by a tradition of the Prophet in which he is reported to have said that God descends every night to the lower heavens and asks: Is there anyone who is to make a request? I am here to grant it to him. Is there any one who asks for forgiveness? I am here to forgive him. This goes until dawn.

In addition to the above evidence from the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* for God's seating Himself upon the throne al-Ash 'arī advanced the following argument: If God is at all places as the Mu'tazilites have maintained, this would compel one to admit that God is under the depths and the created beings are below Him. If this is true, He must be under that above which He is and above that under which He is. Since this is a complete absurdity, one cannot say that God is at all places.

Al-Ash 'arī attacked the Mu'tazilites and others who made use of allegorical interpretations and asserted that God is at all places, by saying that if this interpretation were true then it might be logically concluded that God is also in the womb of Mary.

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

5. What are the doctrines of the Ash'arites on the Qur'ānic verse "*The Merciful (God) is seated on His throne high up in the Heaven"?*

3.3.6 Free- Will

On the issue of free – will the old orthodox position was absolutely fatalistic (jabarism). The Mutazilites, following the principle of divine justice, made out a case for man's free – will. Al-Ash 'arī struck a middle course. 'Man cannot create any thing; God is the only Creator; nor does man's power produce any effect on his actions at all. God creates in His creature power (*qudrah*) and choice (*ikhtiyār*). Then He creates in him his actions corresponding to the power and choice thus created.' According to al-Ash'arī, though the action of the creature is created by God both as to its initiative and as to its production yet it is acquired by the creature. Acquisition (*kasb*) corresponds to the creature's power and choice previously created in him; he is only the locus (*maḥall*) or subject of his action. In this way al-Ash'arī is supposed to have accounted for free will and made man responsible for his actions. For example he says, a man writes with a pen on a piece of paper. God creates in his mind the will to write and at the same time He grants him the power to write thus bringing about the apparent motion of the hand and the pen and the appearance of the words on the paper. Thus the whole theory of acquisition amounts to al-Ash'arī saying that the significance of man's

freedom lies in his consciousness of freedom in himself. Man gives assent to the works, which are accomplished in him by God, and claims this as his own.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

6. Summarise the discussion on man's power and free – will as taught by al-Ash'arī.

3.4: Summary

The whole of the third *Hijrah* century was the era of powerful reaction to Mu'tazilites'rationalist teachings. The Traditionalists adhered strictly to literal interpretation of the Qur'ān and refused to allow reasoning in-road to religious doctrines. They even regarded any theological discussion as (*bid'ah*). Their reaction against the Mu'tazilites went to such an extent that even the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'ān were interpreted by them in a purely literal sense. For instance "Gods settling Himself upon His Throne" is understood literally; the how of it is unknown, belief in it is obligatory and questioning about it is an innovation. Every dogma was to be believed in without raising question 'how' or 'why'.

But such an attitude of blind faith could not be maintained for any length of time. Islam, which is meant to be a Universal religion and a force, had to adapt itself to new thoughts and new environments. So, there arose gradually a party from among the *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, the Traditionalists and the majority opinion (i.e. the orthodox section of the *Ummah*) who realized the necessity of putting Islam on a solid ground by advancing reasons for the traditional beliefs and defending beliefs against all sorts of attacks, internal and external; and thus purging the Islamic faith of all the non-Islamic elements that has crept into it. They founded the orthodox theology of Islam by using *kalām*-the philosophical method, in order to meat the dialectical reasoning of the
Mu'tazilites. These theologians who employed *Kalām* for the defense of their faith were therefore known as *Mutakallimun*.

SUMMARY

Ash 'arism was the school of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. It was begun almost at the same time in different places of Muslim World; in Mesopotamia, by 'Alī bn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī (d.circa 941-945 A. D.); in Egypt, by al-Ṭaḥāwī (d.942 A. D.); and in Muslim East i. e. Iraq, Iran, Sind and Hind, by Mansūr al-Māturidī. Among these three al-Ash 'arī was the

most popular hero before whom Mu‘tazilite system crumbled; and he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox theology. The school founded by him was known after him as *al-Ash'ariyyah* (Asharism).

3.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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3.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Unit 4: Biography of al-Ash‘arī and His Short Creed

CONTENTS

4.1: Introduction
4.2: Learning Objectives
4.3: Background to Biography of al-Ash‘arī and His Short Creed
4.3.1: Short Biography of al-Ash'arī (330/945)
4.3.2: Al-Ash'arī’s Muslim Catechism
4.4: Summary
4.5: References/Further Readings
4.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

4.1: INTRODUCTION

As you have been told in the previous Unit, Ash'arism was attributed to the name of Abul-Hasan Ali ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ash'arī (d.c. 330/945). As it has also been indicated al-Mātūridī and aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī's schools of theology similar to that of al-Ash'arī arose at the same time in Samarqanda and Egypt respectively. All the three produced treatises which were been used as text books in schools. This Unit gives a biographical account of *Imām* Abul-Hasan ‘Alī al-Ash'arī and a translation of his catechism as a sample of the treatises of the *Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah* movement.

4.2: Learning Objectives

Having digested this unit you would be able to

(i) identify three representatives of orthodox school of Islamic theology
(ii) give a biographical account of al-Ash'arī and sum up his treatise on the *Sunni* creed.

4.3: Biography of al-Ash‘arī and His Short Creed

4.3.1. Abul- Hasan ‘Alī al-Ash'arī:

His full name is Abul-Hasan ‘Alī bn Ismā‘īl al-Ash’arī a seventh generation descendant of Abu Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, the reputable Companion of the Prophet Muhammad. He was born in Baṣrah in 260 A.H. In his early youth he was attending the sittings of Traditionalists and Jurists but always with his tutor Abu ‘Alī al-Jubbāī taking lessons in the Science of Islamic Creed (*'ilmu al-Aqā'id*). As a disciple of al-Jubbāī, he became a member of the Mu’tazilite's school and champion of Mu’tazilism. Because he was an

eloquent speaker while his mentor was only a good authour, he represented him at discussion and debate forums on many occasions until he was forty.

Al-Ash'arī then disagreed with his teacher on some issues such as the question of *aş-şalāḥ wal-aşlaḥ*, which implies that it is incumbent on God to do what is in the best interest of man and for which his tutor could not provide him with a convincing answer. Al-Ash'arī came to al-Jubbāʾī and presented the case of three brothers; one being God-fearing, another godless and a third having died as a child, and asked him as to what would be their positions on the Resurrection. Al-Ash'arī thus boycotted the Mu‘tazilites' camp as his teacher was unable to give a satisfactory answer.

He secluded in his house for some time comparing the proofs of mu’tazilism with other existing views. He then came out on a Friday and mounted the pulpit in the Central Mosque of Basrah and declared: He who knows me knows who I am, and he who does not know me let him know that I am Abu al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ash'arī; I used to maintain that the Qur'ān is created, that eyes of men shall not see God and that the creatures create their actions. Lo! I repent that I have been a Mu‘tazilī. I renounce these opinions and I take the engagement to refute the Mu’tazilah and expose their infamy and turpitude." O men: I have been away from you all these days because I compared notes and the proofs were seen as balance and none carried weight above the other. Then I sought for guidance from Allah and he guided me to what I have preserved in these my books. I have divested myself of all the creeds I was holding as I am divesting myself from this cloth. He then presented what he authored from the point of view of the Majority of Jurists and Traditionists. Whatever might be the cause of al-Ash'arī's change, he became terribly in earnest for the task set before himself when he changed.

Al-Ash'arī pursued his adversaries, the Mu‘tazilah and all men of selfish interest wherever they were found; spread the tentacles of his supporters to nooks and corners.. Most scholars called him the *Imām Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* (Leader of the Sunnis and Muslim Majority) because he accepted all the creeds contained in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* and approves apparent meaning of the seemingly ambiguous verses not necessarily comparing God's Attributes and qualities with those of men.

The various groups of the people who read his books took him to be their leader, ascribed themselves to his system. The followers of his system are popularly known by the name *al-Ashā'irah*. He died in 230 A.H.

Al-Ash'arī was reported to be a prolific writer being ascribed the authourship of about three hundred books; but one of his biographers, Ibn Asakir, mentions only nineyty-three of his works. Brockelmann, in his Gazetteer Arabischan Littérateur, enumerates a few of these. Three that are in print and may be found on some Muslim websites are: *Al-Ibānah 'an Uşūl ad-Diyānah; Ar-Risālah fi Istiḥsān al-Khawḍ fil-Kalām and Maqālāt al-*

Islāmiyyīn. The *Maqālāt* has been said to be the most authentic book on the views of different schools about religious dogmas and doctrines.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Write a biography of al-Ash'arī; mention some of his contribution to Islamic theology among other things.

4.3.2 Al-Ash‘arī’s Muslim Catechism

Below is a complete translation

Our doctrine which we teach and our religion (*diyāna*) which we follow consists in holding fast to the Book of God and the Usage (*sunna*) of His Prophet and to that which is handed down from the Companions, their immediate followers (*tābī‘n*) and from the leaders (*imāms*) in tradition--with that we take refuge; and we teach that which Ahmad ibn Hanbal--may God illumine his face, exalt his rank and make great his reward--followed; and we shun that which is opposed to his doctrine. For he is the excellent leader, the perfect chief, through whom God made plain the truth, when error was made manifest, and showed the path and smote down the innovations of the innovators, the deviations of the deviators and the doubts of the doubters. So, the mercy of God be upon him for an appointed leader and an instructed chief, and upon all the leaders of the Muslims.

The sum of our doctrine is this,

that we believe in God, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, in all that has come from God, and what trustworthy men (*thiqah*) have reported from the Apostles of God; we oppose nothing thereof.

That God is One God, Single, One, Eternal; beside Him no God exists; He has taken to Himself no wife (*ṣāḥibah*), nor child (*walad*); and that Muhammad is His Servant ('*abd*) and His Apostle.

That Paradise and Hell are Verity and that the Hour (*as-sā‘ah*) will come without doubt, and God will resurrect those that are in the graves.

That God has settled Himself (*istawā*) upon His throne, as He has said, (Qur. 20, 4); "the *Raḥmān* has settled Himself upon His throne."

That God has a countenance, as He has said, (Qur. 55, 27); "and the countenance of thy Lord will abide, full of majesty and glory;"

and two hands, as He has said, (Qur. 5, 69); "much more! both His hands are spread out," and (Qur. 38, 75); "that which I have created with both My hands;" and two eyes, without asking how (*bila kayfa*), as He has said, (Qur. 54, 14'); "which swims forth under Our eyes."

That whoever thinks that God's name is other than He, is in error.

That God has Knowledge (*'ilm*), as He has said, (Qur. 35, 12); "Not one woman becomes pregnant and brings forth, except by His knowledge."

We maintain that God has Power (*qudrah*), as He has said, (Qur. 41, 14); "and have they not seen that God who created them is stronger than they?"

We maintain that God has Hearing (*sam'u*) and Seeing (*başar*) and do not deny it, as do the Mu'tazilites, Jahmites and Kharijites.

We teach that God's Word (*kalām*) is uncreated, and that He has never created anything except by saying to it, "Be!" and it forthwith became, as He has said, (Qur, 16, 42); "Our speech to anything when We willed it was, 'Be' and it was."

Nothing exists upon earth, be it good or bad, but that which, God wills; but all things are by God's Will (*mashī'ah*). No one is able to do anything before God does it, neither is anyone independent of God, nor can he withdraw himself from God's Knowledge.

There is no Creator but God. The works (*a' māl*) of creatures are created and predestined by God, as He said, (Qur. 37, 94); "and God has created you and what ye do." Man is able to create nothing; but they are created, as He has said, (Qur. 35, 31); "Is there any Creator except God?" and (Qur. 16, 17) "and is He who created like him who created not?" and (Qur. 52, 35); "were they created out of nothing, or are they the creators?" and such passages are many in the Qur'ān.

And God maintains the believers in obedience to Him, is gracious unto them, cares for them, reforms them, and guides them aright; but the unbelievers He leads astray, guides them not aright, vouchsafes them not Faith (*īmān*), by His Grace, as the People of error and pride maintain. For should He be gracious unto them and help them aright, then would they be pious, and should He guide them aright, then would they allow themselves to be guided aright, as He has said, (Qur. 7, 177); "whom God guideth aright, he allows himself to be guided aright, and whom He leads astray, they are the

losers." God is able to help the unbelieving aright and to be gracious unto them, so that they shall become believing, but He wills that they shall be unbelieving as is known; for He has made them unyielding to all help and sealed their hearts.

Good and Evil happen according to the Destiny (*qaḍā'*) and Decree (*qadar*) of God for good and evil, for the sweet and the bitter. We know that the misfortune that befalls us is not in order that we may go astray, and that the good fortune which befalls us is not in order that we may go aright. We have no control over that which is good or hurtful to us, except so far as God wills. We flee from our anxieties to God and commit at all times our distress and poverty to Him.

We teach that the Qur'ān is God's Word, and that it is uncreated, and that whosoever says that it is created is an unbeliever (*kāfir*).

We believe that God at the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāmah*) will be visible to the eyes, as the moon is seen upon the night of the full moon; the believers will see Him, according to Traditions, which have come down from the Prophet.

We teach that while the believers will see Him, the unbelievers will be separated from Him by a wall of division, as God has said, (Qur. 83, 15); "Surely not! They will be separated from their Lord, upon that Day."

We teach that Moses sought God that he might see Him in this world; then God revealed Himself to the mountain and turned it into dust and taught Moses thereby that he could not see Him in this world (Qur. 7, 139).

We are of the opinion that we may not accuse anyone of unbelief (*kufr*), who prays towards Mecca, on account of sin committed by him, such as unchastity, theft, wine drinking, as the Kharijites believe, who judge that those thereby become unbelievers.

We teach that whoever commits a great sin (*kabīrah*), or anything like it, holding it to be allowed, is an unbeliever, since he does not believe in its prohibition.

We teach that Islam is a wider idea than Faith (*īmān*), so that not every Islam is Faith.

We believe that God turns the hearts upside down, and holds them between two of His fingers, that He lays the heavens upon a finger and the earth upon a finger, according to the tradition from the Prophet.

We believe that God will not leave in Hell any of those who confess His Unity (*muwaḥḥid*) and hold fast to the Faith, and that there is no Hell for him whom the Prophet has by his witness appointed to Paradise.

We hope for Paradise for sinners and fear on their account, that they will be punished in Hell.

We teach that God will release a few out of Hell, on account of Muhammad's intercession (*shafa'ah*) after they have been scorched there.

We believe in the punishment of the grave.

We believe that the Tank (*ḥawḍ*) and the Weight (*Mīzān*) are Verities: that the Bridge (*aṣ-Ṣirāṭ)* is a Verity; that Resurrection (*ba'th*) after death is a Verity; that God will set up His creatures in a place (*mawqif*) and will hold a reckoning with the Believers.

We believe that Faith (*īmān*) consists in word (*qawl*) and in work (‘*amal*) and that it increases and diminishes.

We trust in the sound Traditions handed down from the Apostle of God, transmitted by trustworthy people (*thiqah*), man of integrity from man of integrity, up to the Apostle.

We hold by the love of the early Believers (*salaf*), whom God chose to be Companions to the Prophet, and we praise them with the praise with which God praised them, and we carry on their succession.

We assert that the *Imām* succeeding the Apostle of God was Abu Bakr; that God made Religion (*dīn*) great by him, and caused him to conquer the Apostates (*murtadds*). The Muslims made him their *Imām*, just as Muhammad had made him *Imām* at prayers.

Then followed [as recognized *Imām*] ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; then ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān; his murderers killed him out of wickedness and enmity;

then ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. These are the *Imām*s after the Apostle, and their caliphate is that of the Prophetic office [*i.e.*, they are, though not prophets, successors of the Prophet].

We bear witness of Paradise for the Ten (*al-asharatu-l-mubashsharah*), to whom the Apostle bore witness of it, and we carry on the succession of the other Companions of the Prophet and hold ourselves far from that which was in dispute between them.

We hold that the four *Imām*s were in the true way, were rightly guided and excellent, so that no one equals them in excellence.

We hold as true the traditions, which the People of Tradition (*naql*) have established, concerning the descent of God to the lowest heaven (*samā' ad-dunyā*), and that the Lord will say, "Is there a supplicant? Is there a seeker for forgiveness?" and the rest of that which they have handed down and established, contrary to that which the mistaken and misled opined.

We ground ourselves in our opposition on the Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the agreement of the Muslims and what is in accordance therewith, but put forth no novelty (*bid'a*) not sanctioned by God, and we opine of God nothing that we have not been taught.

We teach that God will come on the Day of Resurrection, as He has said, (Qur. 89, 23); "When the earth shall be turned to dust, and the Lord shall appear and the Angels, rank on rank,"

and that God is near to His servants, in what way (*kayfa*) He wills, as He has said, (Qur. 50, 15); "and We are nearer to him than the artery in his neck;" and (Qur. 53, 8); "Then He approached and came near and was two bows' length distant or even nearer."

To our Religion (*dīn*) belongs further, that we on Fridays and on festival days pray behind every person, pious and profane--so are the conditions for congregational prayers, as it is handed down from Abd Allah ibn 'Umar that he prayed behind al-Hajjāj.

To our Religion belongs the wiping (*masḥ*) of the inner boots (*khuffs*) upon a journey and at home, in contradiction to the deniers of this.

We uphold the prayer for peace for the *Imām*s of the Muslims, submission to their office, and maintain the error of those who hold it right to rise against them whenever there may be apparent in them a falling away from right. We are against armed rebellion against them and civil war.

We believe in the appearance of anti-Christ (*al-Masīḥ ad-Dajjal*) according to the tradition handed down from the Prophet; in the punishment

of the grave, and in Munkar and Nakīr and in their questions to the buried in their graves.

We hold the tradition of the journey to heaven (*mi'rāj*, Qur. 17) of Muhammad as true, and declare many of the visions in sleep to be true, and we say that there is an explanation for them.

We uphold the alms for the dead of the Muslims and prayer for them, and believe that God will help them therewith.

We hold as true that there are enchanters in the world, and that enchantment is and exists.

We hold as a religious duty the prayer which is held over the dead of those who have prayed toward Mecca, whether they have been believers or godless; we uphold also that it is their right to inherit them.

We acknowledge that Paradise and Hell are created,

and that whoever dies or is killed, dies or is killed at his appointed time (*'ajal*);

that articles of sustenance (*rizq*) from God, with which He sustains His creatures, consist of the lawful (*ḥalāl*) and the forbidden (*ḥarām*);

that Satan makes evil suggestions to men, and puts them in doubt, and causes them to be possessed, contrary to that which the Mu'tazilites and the Jahmites maintain, as God said, (Qur. 2, 276); "Those who take usury will [at the Resurrection] stand there like one whom Satan causes to be possessed by madness," and (Qur. 114, 4 *ff*.); "I take my refuge in God, from the evil suggestion, from the stealthy one who makes suggestions in the hearts of men, by means of men and Jinn."

We affirm that God may distinguish the pious by signs, which He manifests through them.

Our teaching concerning the little children of the polytheists (*mushriks*) is this, that God will kindle a fire in the other world for them, and will say, "Run in there;"--as the tradition says.

We believe that God knows what men do and what they will to do, what happens and how that which does not happen, if it should happen, would happen.

We believe in the obedience of the *Imām*s and in their counsel of the Muslims. We consider right the separation from every inciter to innovation (*bid'ah*) and the turning aside from the People of wandering desires (*ahl al-ahwā'*).

--Translated from the Arabic text in Spitta's Zur Geschichte al-As'ari's, pp. 133 *ff*.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Identify the first twenty articles of belief in al-Ash'arī's catechism.
3. Highlight the last twenty five articles of faith in the Muslim creed by al-Ash'arī.

CONCLUSION

The above English translation of al-Ash'arī's Muslim catechism has been downloaded and adapted from http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal . The translation of similar catechisms authored by al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111 C.E.) an-Nasafī (d.) and al-Fuḍalī (d.) can also be downloaded from the same website. Their original Arabic texts are in print in various forms and in wide circulation with commentaries and glossaries added to some of them. So also are the catechisms of aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī ((229 – 321 (844 – 933)); as-Sanūsī (c. 1430 - 1490), *al-Wāsiṭiyyah* of the celebrated theologian, ibn Taymiyyah. Kitabut-Tawḥīd, the catechism written by al-Māturidī (238 – 332/ 853 – 949) is also in print and in various forms, with or without commentaries, and as prescribed text-books in Muslim religious Institutions of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Zaytunah Institute in Tunis etc. etc..

4.4: SUMMARY

This unit presents the biography of al-Ash'arī, one of the celebrated Muslim theologian after whom Islamic orthodox movement is named. The unit also provides a complete translation of his catechism. Published catechisms, similar to that of al-Ash'arī, with translation and commentaries are enumerated as concluding remarks.

4.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Ali bn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī http://www.sacred-texts.com/cdshop/index,htm.inal.
(3) Saeed Sheikh (n.d.). *Studies in Muslim Philosophy* , Pakistan, Kashmiri Bazaar

Lahore.
(4) M. M. Sharif A History of Muslim Philosophy
(5) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press

4.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

MODULE 4: *Al-Ghaybiyyāt*: Belief in the Unseen - According to Different Schools Opinions

Unit 1 Angels, Spirit and Jinns
Unit 2 Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and Enjoyment in the Grave
Unit 3 Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror
Unit 4 Eschatological Issues III: Sins, Record of Deeds and Recompense

CONTENTS

1.1: Introduction
1.2: Learning Outcomes
1.3: Background to Angels, Spirit and Jinns
1.3.1. Angels: Their Nature and Functions
1.3.2 Superiority between Angels and Prophets
1.3.3. The Scribes and the Protectors.
1.3.4. Spirit (Soul)
1.3.5. Jinn and Satan
1.4: Summary
1.5: References/Further Readings
1.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This Module deals exclusively with the *Ghaybiyāt,* the theological terms for belief in the unseen. It involves issues we only conceived through information reaching us from Messengers of God and holy books. They are doctrines pertaining to Angels, Jinn, Soul, Death and Eschatology, i. e. life after death. We shall start with those issues listed above in sections 3. 1. – 3. 6. in this unit.

1.2. Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

(i) define Angels of God and describe their nature
(ii) substantiate the infallibility of the Angels
(iii) discuss superiority between Angels and Prophets according to different school of Islamic theology.
(iv) Highlight the functions of the Scribes and Protectors among the Angels
(v) Give the identity of Jinn and Satan
(vi) Explain the nature of Spirit/Soul

1.3: Background to Angels, Spirit and Jinns

1.3.1. The Angels, Their Nature and Functions:

Angels are bodies created from light, which can transform into various pictures so as to be seen. Their duties are to worship (Allah). This description is supported by the appearance of Jibril while revealing the Qur'ān to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is reported that its appearance is in a horrible picture and many other forms.

The Angels are neither male nor female nor hermaphrodites. They cannot give birth. To ascribe sex to them is considered in Islam as transgression and disbelief.

Allah says : " They called the Angels who are servants of the Beneficent females, do they witness their creation?" (Q.43:19)

Some Angels dwell in heavens while some live on earth. The Qur'ān, *Ḥadīth* and consensus opinion of scholars support their existence. Therefore it is compulsory to believe generally in all of them and particularly in Jibril, Mikail and those who are mentioned in the Scriptures, such as those carrying or surrounding the *'Arsh* (Allah's Throne) and those keeping records of deeds of men.

Allah created the Angels as His soldiers to implement His laws and orders among His creatures. The most honoured among them are the dwellers of heavens who uphold or surround the '*Arsh* to illuminate it (Q.29:75). Those in charge of hell are giants with Angel Malik as their leader (Q.43:77). Angel Jibrīl is Allah's Ambassador to His Prophets. The Angel in charge of rain is called Mikail. He is also in charge of *rizq* i. e. sustenance and (means of livelihood). The Angel to blow the trumpets to usher in Resurrection is Isrāfīl. The one that takes the souls of human beings to terminate their lives is Azrāīl. Allah alone knows the number of His warriors.

Angels never disobey Allah's command; they promptly do His orders. (Q.66:6)

" They worship Him, glorify Him and prostrate to Him, i. e. their duties and purpose of their creation is to bow in humility, perform functions assigned to them as can be further deduced from the following verses. "When your Lord told the Angels I am creating on the earth a vicegerent. They said would You put on it those who would do evil and shed blood, when we have for so long sung Your praise and sanctified Your name (Q.2:30)?

In this question, the Angels did not intend to discredit Adam and honour themselves, but their intention was to ask about the purpose of his creation a fact they have known from guarded tablet. This is evidenced in the fact that:

(i) When God commanded the Angels to prostrate for Adam, they all prostrated. Satan refused, was obstinate; and was among the disbelievers. The disobedience of Satan, who was among the Angels who were infallible,

shows that he was not Angel, but Jin. Allah says: He is among the Jinn and disobeys the commandment of His Lord.

(ii) The story of Ārūt and Mārūt discussed after next few paragraphs, is also evidence
of infallibility of Angels.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Explain the Angels, their nature and explain their functions.

1.3.2 Superiority between Angels and Prophets.

Actually knowledge of most honoured and superior belongs to Allah, however
(a) In the Muslims' beliefs, our leader Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the best of all
the heavenly or earthly creatures; including Angels, Jinn and Mankind;
This position is based on the prophetic Tradition:

> "I am most honoured among the first and the last in the sight of Allah; and this is neither pride nor boasting; it is confirmation of the injunction of Allah."But proclaim the bounty of your Lord."

The contrary opinion of Zamakhsharī that raises Jibrīl above the Prophet (Ş) should be disregarded. He supports his view with the verse "Surely, this is the word of the Gracious Messenger, held in honour by the Lord of the thrown, obeyed and faithful. No, your Companion is not mad." Truly, the qualities of Jibrīl are many in this verse; and that of the Prophet is only one, which is negation of his madness. It is not evidence that Jibrīl is higher in honour than the Prophet. The circumstances surrounding the revelation of the verse is to refute the allegation made by the unbelievers when they said: "Verily, he (the Prophet) was taught by a man,"and their saying that " he lies on Allah or there is madness in him" The message is not to establish the superiority of anyone of them above the other.

Also, the teaching of the Prophet by Jibrīl does not indicate that he (Jibrīil) is superior to the Prophet (Ş), because the Teacher of the Prophet Muhammad is Allah." Jibrīl is only a Messenger to the Prophet (Ş).

Zamakhsharī however maintains that the Prophet discouraged people from elevating him over others quoting the tradition, which says:

"Do not elevate me over other Prophets" and do not praise me above Yunus bn Mattā; and his saying 'Do not choose me above Mūsā"
The Prophet said these to discourage them from dis-honouring other Prophets. Or he said it before he knew of his honourific position among all

other Prophets; or he said these because of his humble nature and prophetic qualities.

This honour of the Prophet is based on the divine wisdom granted him by Allah,
which is not found in others, Allah says:

"Those are Messengers; of them We have exalted some above others.
To some Allah spoke directly; others He raised to a lofty status".

Also on the issue of who is more superior between the Angels and other Prophets, there are differences of opinion among the Sunnīs (Orthodox Muslims).

The *Ash'ariyyah* maintain that the Prophets generally are superior to the Angels; and that among them, Prophet Ibrahim is next to Prophet Muhammed in superiority. Musa, Isa, Nuhu and other Messengers in that order follow him. The rest of the Prophets follows them. Among the Angels; the *Ash'ariyyah* maintain that Jibrīl and Mikail are most superior; and neither of them is more superior than the other. They are followed by Israfil, then 'Azarail; then the others.

In the doctrine of the *Matūrīdiyyah*, the Prophets are superior to Jubril, Mikāil and the rest of the leaders among the Angels. They are also of the opinion that the leaders among the Angels are superior to the generality of the believers, and that the pious *awliyaullah* (saints) such as Abubakr 'Umar and the rest of the believers are superior to all other Angels most especially the upholders of *'Arsh.*

.The Sunnis base their opinion on the following:

(1) Allah's commandment of the Angels to prostrate for Adam was to show respect for him. That was an indication that Adam was more superior to the Angels.

(2) Knowledge imparted to Adam placed humanity over Angels. "They are not the same those who have knowledge and those who have not."

(3) Obedience to God from mankind is burdensome. It requires self-efforts to overcome Satan and suppress worldly passions or obstacles and therefore leads to huge rewards, which make man superior to Angels. The Prophet said: The most virtuous work is the most burdensome.

(4) Allah (SWT) says: "Verily Allah has chosen Adam and Noah and the
house-hold of Abraham and the household of Imrān above all the creation"

The opinions of the Mu'tazilites and their supporters.

The Mu'tazilites believe that Angels are superior to Prophets supporting their views with the following points.

(1) Allah says: " Al-Masīh Īsā do not deny servant-hood of Allah. Nor the Angels who are very close to Allah." They argue that proximity of Angels to Allah is a clear indication of their superiority over Angels.

(2) The Angels are teachers of the Prophets; and teachers are superior to their students.

(3) The Angels are of clean souls. They are infallible and have no selfish desire. Therefore they should be more honoured.

The Ash'arites debunked all the arguments of the Muʿtazilites seeing the first as irrelevant, or saying Allah was the tutor of Muhammad, Jibrīl was only the bearer of messages etc. etc.

However, superiority of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) above all other creatures is the only conclusive issue for which there is consensus. Superiority between Angels, Prophets and Mankind is not a fundamental theological issue.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

Highlight the differences of opinions among the Ash'arites, the Māturidites and the Mu'tazilites on the issue of superiority between the Angels and the Prophets.

1.3.3 The Scribes and the Protectors.

It is compulsory to believe that there are Protectors and Scribes among the Angels.

The Protectors : These are Angels Allah has created to protect man from harmful or dangerous things. "For every man there is Protector" (Q. 78:4). It is reported that 'Uthmān asked the Prophet (Ş) about the Protector (Angels). The Prophet (Ş) said: "Every mankind is with ten angels in the night and ten in the day; an Angel stays by his right and another by the left; two in the front and back, two by both sides, one holding his furlong; he raises it if he is humble and humiliates it if he is arrogant. Two are between his lips, recording his invocation of blessing on the Prophet (Ş), the tenth preventing snake from entering his mouth." This is blessing of Allah. They (Angels) stay by man at all times.

The Scribers: They are Angels recording all that emanates from mankind in words, actions and intentions. Angels of blessing and mercy boycott places where there are dogs and pictures. The two Scribes

attached to man are called Raqīb and ‘Atīd. They do not depart him as long as he lies and would stand by his grave after his death, seeking forgiveness for him, if he is a believer; and invoking curse on him if he is an infidel.

It is obvious that for every one are four Scribes, two in the night and two in the daytime, shifting with each other at *subḥ* and *‘aṣr* times. The Scribe of good deeds stands by his right side while the Scribe of evil deeds is by the left side. Not until when forgiveness is not sought after six hours that it will be recorded.

Allah says: “ Raqīb and ‘Atīd are present at all his utterances.” He (SWT) also says: Actually on you are watchers, respected recorders, who know what you are doing.” (Q.82:11)

It is compulsory to believe that, there are Recorders and Keepers for each person; and there are Scribes among the Angels known to Allah alone. Anyone who rejects anything about this is an infidel.

This belief teaches self examination and not to wait till the approach of the last day; to continue with good deeds and desist from his evil deeds. A Prophetic tradition advises “Assess yourself before you are assessed”.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Who are the Protectors and the Scribes among the Angels?

1.3.4 Spirit (Soul)

Soul is substance attached to the body to control it according to the opinion of the philosophers and their supporters among the Mu‘tazilites. Many Sunnīs, Jurist and Sūfī theologians maintain that soul is an invisible body created from light, existing and controlling parts of the body. It is not in need of food and does not grow nor degenerate. Soul‘s shape can be likened to the shape of the body according to the Maliki Jurists who permits discussion of it. However, majority of authorities of Muslim theology are against dabbling into discussing soul , while some prohibit it. They based their opinion on Allah’s word: “ They will ask you about soul/spirit say it is an affair of your Lord, and only little knowledge about it is given to you”.

Createdness of the Soul: The consensus is that soul is originated; not eternal. There are differences however, on whether its creation is before that of the body or after it.

Those who believe that it existed before the body based their opinion on the saying of the Prophet that souls are large armies. Those who know each other (among them) leave together and those who do not know each other do not” Aishah reported the *Ḥadīth*.

Meanwhile, Al-Ghazzālī and his followers maintain that it is created after the body. They based their stand on the authentic *Ḥadīth* that says "the creation of men is made in the womb of his mother as sperm for forty days, then he became a clot of blood, then flesh like that, then an Angel will be sent to it to breath spirit into it." Its place is either in the stomach or in the heart or in the totally of the body; but Allah knows best.

Is soul/ spirit single or multiple?. 'Izzud-Dīn ibn Abdus-Salām asserts that there are two souls in the body. One of them is the awakening soul. God so made it that if it is in the body man will be awake. When it departs the body he falls asleep and be dreaming.

The other is 'life soul'. It's presence in the body gives life to it; and when it leaves the body it dies. No one knows there exact place in the body except Allah.

"Allah takes soul at death; the one that does not die while asleep; and withholds the one that has been destined to die and releases others until their appointed time.

Thus the soul, taken and withheld is 'life soul'; while the one that is taking and releasing is the 'awakening and distinction soul'

As for supporters of the first opinion, they compared sleep with death because of unconsciousness in each of them; and they compare its release with being in a waking state. Thus it is a single soul which is removed while in the state of death and returned while waking up until it is finally taken at its appointed time.

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Discuss the characteristics of soul, its functions and various doctrines attached to it.

1.3.5 Jinn and Satan

Who are the Jinn? Was Satan an Angel**?**

The Qur'ān describes the Jinn as a body created from fire. And according to some theologians they are flexible and capable of assuming different shapes and performing invisible actions. There are among them Believers and Unbelievers. On the other hand, Satan is a body from fire. Its duty is to put people in problem and lead them astray. Another opinion says: Jinn and Satan are the same. They are body made of fire having intelligence and able to change to pleasant and ugly shapes. They are like mankind in the act of eating, drinking, reproducing and talking. There are among them righteous and devilish sinners. Pointer to these facts is the Qur'ānic passages:

"As for the Jinn We created them initially from smoke of fire." (Q.55:15)

"Say it is revealed on to me that a group among the Jinn listened to the
Qur'ān, They said: We have listened to a wonderful Qur'ān, which
guides to the straight path. We believe in it and we will not associate
anything with our Lord for ever." (Q.72:1-2)

The Prophet (S) praised them when he said: "the Jinn are better than you people, whenever I recited to them "which of the favour of your Lord will you belie?" They would say "We do not belie any of your favours. To you is the Praise.

As their existence has been authenticated by the above Qur'ānic statements and those of the Prophet and the consensus of the scholars, absolute belief in them becomes necessary and whoever denies it is a *Kāfir*.

Further on Satan Allah says:

"When we told the Angels to prostrate for Adam, they all prostrated except
Shaytān, he refused, was obstinate, and He is among the disbelievers.
And He says: 'He is among the Jinns and disobeys the commandment of his Lord.'

This disobedience shows that though *Shaytān* was among the Angels, he is not Angel.

The story about Hārūt and Mārūt who were said to be both Angels needs to be clarified. It was said they descended to teach people magic and they were tempted with a woman. This story was fabricated; it has no base (in Islam) due to the fact that the nature of Angels did not allow them to commit any sin.

The truth about the story is that magicians were many at that period. They were doing strange things naturally with their act of magic and were claiming them to be prophecy from Allah. Then Allah sent down two Angels as a blessing for His worshipers in order to teach people magic so that they could be able to differentiate between magic and divine miracle. "And they did not teach anyone magic until after they have said verily we are temptations do not be an unbeliever in God. It is important to uphold this Qur'ānic version and leave or reject any other things besides this.

Self Assessment Exercise

Define Jinn and Satan and explain their nature. State the significance of the story of Harut and Marut.

CONCLUSION

In the Muslim creed, Allah created the Angels from light as His obedient servants. Duties of some of them are specified and it is a

requirement to have faith in their existence and their functions. The *Ash'ariyyah* including the *Māturīdiyyah* are of the opinion that Prophets are more superior to Angels with minor differences while the Mu'tazilites maintain that the Angels are more superior to Mankind. Little knowledge is granted to man concerning soul and its function. Jinn and Satan share certain things in common with men and others with the Angels. Satan was never an Angel as could be derived from the Holy Qur'ān, particularly the tory of Hārūt and Mārūt.

1.4: SUMMARY

This Unit describes Angels, their nature and their functions. The opinions of the *Ash'ariyyah*, *Māturīdiyyah* and the Mu'tazilites on the issue of superiority between the Angels and the Prophets are also stated in the Unit. Notable among the Angels are Jibril, Azrāil, Mikāil, Mālik, Raqib, Atid, Hamalat al-'Arsh, Protectors and Scribes. Soul, its characteristics, functions and doctrines related to it are also treated in a section of the Unit. A brief description of nature of Jinn and Satan and the truth of the story of Hārut and Mārut concludes the Unit.

1.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Books of Hadith with English Translation.
(3) D. B. MacDonald (1903). Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, London, English trans. of Muhammad al-Fudali's Creed, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalām*, 1903, pp. 315-351
(4) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press.

1.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Unit 2 Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and Enjoyment in the Grave

CONTENTS

2.1: Introduction
2.2: Objectives
2.3: Main Contents
2.3.1: Death and '*Ajal* (Life - Span)
2.3.2: Questioning in the Grave
2.3.3: Torments and Punishment in the Grave
2.3.4: Enjoyments in the Grave
2.4: Summary
2.5: References/Further Readings
2.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

2.1: INTRODUCTION

What is death? Is there life after death? How would such life look like? Religious teachings relating to life after death is called eschatology. As would be seen in the following units Islamic theology contains a lot of issues relating to life after death. These will be discussed in three parts and the first part will be presented in this Unit.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, you would be able to

(i) discuss death and matters relating to '*ajal*, martyrdom and sustenance
(ii) explain questioning of the dead in the grave
(iii) describe the sufferings that unbelievers will encounter in the grave
(iv) give a brief account of enjoyment of the righteous in the grave

2.3 Background to Eschatological Issues I: Death; Questioning, Torment and Enjoyment in the Grave

2.3.1. Death and *Ajal* (Life Span), Martyrdom and Sustenance

Death is the opposite of life. It is the separation of soul from the body and transition from one place to another. Allah created death and made it a destiny for mankind.

That life will expire, there is appointed time for it and it will occur to every living things He (SWT) says: 'You will die and they too will die.'(Q.39:30) 'Every soul will taste death.' (Q.3:185)

Azarāil is the Angel that takes the souls of Mankind, Jinn and other Angels. Say: 'The Angel of Death assigned to you will terminate your life.'(Q.32:11). He is merciful when terminating the life of the believers and

merciless in respect of unbelievers. He has helpers equivalent to the numbers of those to die. Allah (SWT) says: 'Our Messenger takes his life.' Allah (SWT) ascribes taking of life to Himself. (Q.39:42). This is because He (SWT) is the original doer of every thing from the point of view of Islam. The Soul may be removed through the navels, bones or the flesh.

***Ajal* (Apointed Time)**

May "Appointed Time" of death (*Ajal*) be more than one? Does one who is killed die at his appointed time?

In Sunnism (the Islamic Orthodoxy), Man has only one appointed time. 'When their Appointed Time comes, it will not be delayed for one hour nor will it be hastened'. (Q.16:61; 63:11) 'Every one that dies had completed his life-span'; so says a *Ḥadīth* related to the Prophet Muhammad (Ş). Thus One who is killed dies at his appointed time. Even if he was not killed he will still die at that time.

Any additional year is extra known to Allah since things may be unspecified in the records of the Angels and the guarded Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) and would be specific in the knowledge of Allah. On the other hand changes do occur to what is in the knowledge of Allah. 'Allah rubs off what He wishes and confirms what He wishes. With Him is the Mother of the Books. (Q.13:39).

The rubbing of and confirmation is in the record of the Angels or in the Tablet; but in the Mother of the Books is the knowledge of Allah, which cannot be rubbed off. Therefore, the killer should be punished based on the crime.

The majority of the Mu'tazilites (Muslim rationalists) are of the opinion that man has only one life span; and the killer has denied the killed part of it. If he was not killed he would have lived longer. Killing by human being is not supposed to be taken as Death caused by Allah.

A *Ḥadīth* in point referred to is 'Righteousness extends the life-span' Conversely, one killed as a result of punishment might have exhausted his life-span. Such punishment could have been ransomed and the life-span extended. The termination of his life-span could have thus been regarded as his own making.

Ka'bi, in a minority opinion maintains that the killed is not dead because killing is act of man and death is act of God. Allah says: 'And if you die or you are killed' (Q.3:144) thus showing there is difference between the two. The killed has two appointed times; the period of death and the period of killing. If he were not killed he would live till the time of death. This is rejected because the meaning of the verse is that if you die without any cause or you are killed which means with cause, there is no difference in the two. Allah has rejected the opinion of those who said 'Had it been they were with us they would not have died nor killed" by saying "say even if you are in

your homes those against whom death has been written will come to the place of the death". (Q.3:156)

Sustainance:

From the opinion of *Ahlus-Sunnah*: It is what Allah bestows on living thing from which it benefits. Allah says: 'There is no moving (living) creature on the earth unless its provision is due to Allah. (Q.11:6) It is of two types: That which is apparent such as food and attires for the body. And that which is hidden meant for the hearts, such as knowledge and education. The useless one, even with ability to utilize it, is not means of sustenance, because the essence of it is the usage. Ibn Masud reports the Prophet as sayings:

> The holy spirit inspired in my heart that no soul will die unless its means of livelihood has been exhausted. So, fear Allah and be judicious in demanding.
>
> Delay in the sustenance of one of you should not push him to look for it through disobedience of Allah. Because verily what is with Alah should not be obtained except through obeying his commandment.

From the point of view of the Mu'tazilites, the meaning of sustenance is its possession. Thus the essence is possession not the benefit. This opinion is rejected because it is fallacious. Man can take possession of another man's sustenance, as he may not have the ability to exhaust his own sustenance.

There is nothing to be taken against the Sunnis view of sustenance being lawful, unlawful; there is no abomination in this opinion as in the opinion of the Mu'tazilites.

Martydom: Those who died in the Cause of Allah or in the cause of Truth, while fighting rebellions or highway rubbers or while commanding good and forbidding evil are alive enjoying in Paradise in a manner known to their Lord alone.

> "You must not think that those who were slain in the Cause of Allah are dead. They are alive and well provided for by their Lord. (Q.3:169)

However only God knows the kind of life they will be living. But the perfect Barzakh life is that of Prophets, followed by those of Righteous people depending on the degree of their righteousness. This is different from worldly life but it is also likely to be physical. Also, it is in regard to those who die in the cause of Allah alone. They are known as martyrs of this world

and the hereafter. The name is given to them because Allah and the Angels witness them.

Anyone that is killed in the cause of war is called martyrs of the hereafter. He would not be washed nor would prayer be said upon him. But he that dies due to sickness, drowning in water or burnt in fire incident is martyr of the hereafter who should be adjudged as ordinary dead person by washing and offering prayer over him.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Discuss death and *ajal*. Give opinions of various schools on the latter.
2. Highlight Islamic teachings on (i) sustenance (ii) martyrdom.

2.3.2 Questioning in the Grave

It is reported that after the departure of men from the buried corpse, two Angles who are called Munkar and Nakīr would come to him and sit him down, then life would be restored to him so that he can live averagely again between death and worldly life. Allah would also restore the sense organ and the intellect to him so that he can understand the conversation and adequately respond to questions.

At that moment, the two Angels would ask him, who is your Lord? What is your religion? And what do you have to say about the man who was raised among you {and sent to you}? The believers would say; My Lord is Allah, my religion is Islam and the man sent among and to us was Muhammad {S.A.W.}. The Angels would then say to him: "Look at your place in the hell fire which Allah has replaced with another place in the Paradise". And he will definitely see the two together. Then they would order him to sleep well. But as for a hypocrite or an unbeliever, he would not know what to give in answer! Then the torment of the grave as decreed for him will hit him. Almighty Allah said: “Allah will affirm the believers with strong statement in the worldly life and life after, and He will unguide the wrongdoer unbelievers and Allah will do what ever He wishes.” (Q.14:27).

In respect of a deceased just buried, Prophet Muhammad (Ş) was reported to have said: Seek forgiveness for your brother because he is now being interrogated. This questioning will happen to the dead even if the parts of his body get torn or have been eaten by the animals or burnt, pounded, ground and scattered in the air and Allah is capable of everything.

The question of the two angels is the affliction of the grave. It is also said that it is the stammering and hesitation in the answering.

The question is either for the mankind or jinn, but the conditions of the questions vary. There are among them whom the two Angels will mutually ask and among them whom only one of the two angels will ask; and he may

be asked once or thrice. It is even said that the believer will be asked for seven days while the unbelievers will be asked for forty days. So also the questioned will be in his body and soul and not with only one without the other. The questioned also differ on the nature of their question and answer. Among them are those who would be asked about some of their belief and creeds, and among them are those who will be asked about all of them.

Ibn Abass said: They will be asked about *Shahādatayn* {bearing witness to the oneness of Allah and the truthfulness of the message of Prophet Muhammad}. Ikrimah also said it is about the belief in Muhammad and such questioning is particular with this *ummah* or every Prophet with his *ummah.*

Those who are exempted from questioning are those affirmed by the tradition like Prophets, veracious men, martyrs, stationed armies in defence of Muslim frontiers, those who persistently reciting *Sūratul-Ikhlāş* (*Qur'ān* : 112) during their sickness, those who die from disease of plague or pestilence, the dullard, the madman and children.

The wisdom behind the grave questioning: is to expose what the servants of Allah kept hidden in the world like faith and disbelief or obedience and disobedience. Allah will boast by the obedient servants to the angels but he will disgrace the disobedient in the presence of the angels.

The Angels of the grave questioning: it is said that they are two angels for everybody and in other opinion everybody has his own two angels called Munkar and Nakīr.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Expatiate upon the creed that the dead will be questioned by Munkar and Nakīr.

2.3.3 Torments/Punishment in the Grave

Both of them are attributed to the grave only because it is mostly the place of the dead. But Allah can punish or show mercy to whomever He wishes irrespective of whether he is buried or not even if he is crucified, sunk, eaten by the wild animal or burnt to ashes and scattered in the wind. Separation of parts of his body can never even prevent the two. Either the punished or the blessed will feel their conditions with both body and soul together.

The punishment of the grave: it is for the unbelievers and unrepentant hypocrites and sinful believers; it may be relaxed for one whose sins are hidden. Likewise, it may be erased through prayer or charity; and everyone {of such category of the believers} that are asked in their graves will not be punished{on the Day of Judgment}.

Example of the punishment in the grave: squeezing in which no one can escape except whom Allah wishes to save like the Prophets. Another example of this punishment is what was reported from Abu Sa 'īd al-Khudrī

who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: Allah will empower on the unbeliever in his grave, ninety-nine dragons that will be drinking him{i.e. from his blood} and stinging him until the Day of Resurrection comes up. If such dragon blows on the earth, it will never grow green vegetables. A Dragon is like a Snake but bigger in shape.

A proof to the punishment of the grave is the saying of Almighty Allah: "get them sink and put them in hell fire" (Q.69: 30-31); and the Traditions of the Prophet (S) where he said: "be careful of urine, because the general punishment of the grave is through it". The Prophet even passed through two grave yards and said: "Verily, two of them are being punished, and they are not punished because of a major sin; one of them did not use to cover up when urinating, but the second used to spread calumny and slander".

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

4. What are the bases of the doctrine that punishment awaits unbelievers in the grave.
5. Give examples of the punishments from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

2.3.4. Enjoyment/ Beneficence of The Grave:

It is for the believers of this *Ummah*, other ummahs {before it}, adults and minor. Among the favors that will accrue to the dead in the grave are the expansion of the grave, opening of a window into it from Paradise filling the grave with aromatic plants or sweet scents, and turning it to a garden among the gardens of Paradise. It is reported that Allah inspired Prophet Mūsā (AS): "Learn good things and teach it to people because I will illuminate the graves of the teachers and the learners until they will not fear because of their position". And from 'Umar it was reported that the Prophet (S) said: "Whoever provides light in the mosque of Allah, Allah will provide light for him in his grave". The Messenger of Allah also said: "And the grave is either the garden among the gardens of paradise or among the pitches of the hell". Allah says: "Do not think those who are martyred in the cause of Allah are dead but they are living. They are being given sustenance from their Lord." (Q3:169) This is the belief of *Ahlul-Sunnah* (Orthodox Muslims) and majority of the Muʿtazilites (Rationalists).

The Atheists (*Mulḥidūn*) reject all these three beliefs. What is ambiguous to them is that enjoyment and pain, question and answer and anything of that nature cannot be imagined without life and feeling. There is no life after decay of the body and its end. How can one immagine that the dead will be seated up in the grave! How can there be resuscitation of life in

flesh eaten by wicked animals or burnt by fire and turned into ashes that are blown off by air. This as regards the question in the grave, its punishment and enjoyment is irrational. So argue the atheists.

The reply to this ambiguity is that man is made up of body and spirit, it is not necessary that in the life after death that soul will join every part of the body. However it is enough to know its reality that spirit can turn to any of the part, it is there after that the dead will be punished or given enjoyment. Our inability to see this does not mean that it does not exist. We too may be sitting by the side of a sleeper and that sleeper may be having a great enjoyment, which we will not be feeling. When revelation came to the Prophet Muhammad, those sitting by his side did not usually know unless he gave them information about it. These illustrations thus clear the ambiguity about punishment and its enjoyment in the graves.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

6. Enjoyment awaits the righteous in the grave".
7. Elaborate on this statement removing what seems to be ambiguous to the atheists.

CONCLUSION

Life will expire, there is appointed time for it. Azarāil is the Angel that takes the souls of Mankind, Jinn and other Angels. The Sunnīs and the Mu'tazilites agree that Man has only one appointed time. They disagree on death by killing. The Sunnīs say it is still death at appointed time while the Mu'tazilites say the killer has denied the killed part of his *ajal*. If he were not killed he would have lived longer**.** Man dies only after exhausting his sustenance. Martyrs are alive and well provided for by their Lord but only God knows their kind of life. Munkar and Nakīr would subject the dead to questioning in the grave. The grave shall be like Paradise for the righteous and like pit of fire for the devilish.

2.4: SUMMARY

The theological issue relating to death, *ajal* (life span), martyrdom and sustenance have been dealt with at the beginning of this unit. This is followed by detailed discussion of the doctrine of questioning of the dead in the grave. An account of the torments to be suffered by the unbeliever and the beneficence to be enjoyed by the righteous, with examples from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* are given at the end of the Unit.

2.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.

(2) Books of Hadith with English Translation.
(3) D. B. MacDonald (1903). Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, London, English trans. of Muhammad al-Fudali's Creed, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalām*, 1903, pp. 315-351
(4) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo, Al-Azhar Colleges Press.

2.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Unit 3 Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror, Sins and Repentance

CONTENTS

3.1: Introduction
3.2: Learning Outcomes
3.3: Background to Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror, Sins and Repentance
3.3.1: Nature of Resurrection and its Definition.
3.3.2: Order of Resurrection among some Prophets and *Ḥashr* (the Gathering)
3.3.3: The Last Day and Its Horror
3.3.4: *Al-Ḥisāb* (Accountability)
3.3.5: Sins, Repentance and Consequences of Dieing without Repentance
3.4: Summary
3.5: References/Further Readings
3.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

3.1: INTRODUCTION

What is Resurrection? Will it be in spirit alone or in body and spirit? In what order will it be? What follows after rising up? What is *Ḥashr* and what is *Ḥisāb*? How will the Last Day look like? These eschatological issues and others like sins and consequences of dieing without repentance and divergent opinions of theological schools in some of them are the issues raised and discussed with you in this Unit.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, you would be able to

(i) define resurrection and explain its nature.

(ii) highlight the order resurrection will take particularly in regard to Prophets

(iii) describe the Last Day and its horror

(iv) discuss *Ḥashr*, *Ḥisāb* and their significance on resurrection.

(v) expatiate sin, repentance and consequence of dieing without repentance.

3.3: Background on Eschatological Issues II: Resurrection, Last Day and Its Horror, Sins and Repentance

3.3.1. Nature of Resurrection and its Definition

All the Revealed Books are agreed that there will be Resurrection; and so, it is essential to believe in it. Anyone who denies it should be adjudged an infidel (*kāfir*). The purpose of Resurrection is to obtain the reward for obeying the commandments of Allah and punishment for the disobedience of Him.

Meanwhile, there are three schools of thought on the nature of Resurrection.

1. The philosophers who believe in it maintain that the Resurrection will be in spirit only i. e. the return of souls to its original nature before entering the body. They reject the resurrection of the body as believed by the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians; and as the verses of the Qur'ān indicate. Allah (SWT) says: "Does man think we shall never put his bones together again? Indeed, We can remold even his fingers"(Q.75:3-1). He the (atheist) asks: "Who will give life to rotten bones! Say: "He will give them life again Who created them at first." (Q.78:39-40)
2. Some tender - hearted philosophers assert that it will be in body and spirit. They assert that some disjointed parts of the body will be gathered together and restored to life after death and that spirit will return to the body after its separation.
3. The Islamic scholars maintain that Resurrection is in spirit and body. In the opinion of the majority, Resurrection is the return to life after its extinction i.e. when there is no more existence of the body, nor trace nor seeing of it by the eyes. Pointer to this is Allah's statement: "All those that live on earth are doomed to die"; and "All things shall perish except Him (His face).(Q.55:26-27)

And He Allah (SWT) says:"As We created you initially We will return you." (Q.18:48). "As We started the first creation We will return it." (Q.21:104).

The Sunnīs are of the opinion that the return of the body to life will be after its complete separation from life, when none of its parts will exist to be seen. As illustration they refer to divine account of Prohet Ibrahim's practical experiment.

"Take four birds, said He; draw them to you and cut their bodies to pieces.

Scatter them over the mountaintops then call them. They will come swiftly

to you". (Q.2:260)

Sometimes it does happen that the earth will not devour the bodies of people such as the Prophets, the martyrs the callers to prayer, *muadhdhin*, the

ṣūfī saints, scholars of high integrity and upholders of Qur'ānic teachings and injunctions.

Will Resurrection be with the original parts of the body? Or will the the original parts of the body be replaced with another that will continue to exist from the initial life till the end of it?

There are two views. One is that body will be resurrected in the same face but with different appearance. The followers of the school of al-Ash'arī hold to belief in Resurrection with different body. The authentic statement is that the same body and face will be resurrected. To prove this, we can use the ability of human beings to produce video recorder showing the body, actions and utterances of man.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1. Define Resurrection in Islam. Give the differences of opinion regarding its nature.

3.3.2 Order of Resurrection among some Prophets and *Ḥashr* (the Gathering)

The first to come out of grave (i.e. which the earth will put forth) is our Prophet Muhammend (S) He is the first to be resurrected; the first to be at the Gathering place and the first to enter Paradise (*al-Jannah*). After him, among other Prophets is Prophet Nuh (A). The first person to enter Paradise after the Prophets is Abubakr (R). This has been confirmed either by the Qur'ān or the *Ḥadīth* and has been the consensus of the '*Ulamā*' (Muslim Scholars). Allah (SWT) says;

'The Day Allah will resurrect them generally.
And He will inform them of all their deeds
Allah recorded it and they forget' (Q.58:96)

Allah (SWT) also says:

The *Kāfir*ūn assumed they will not be resurrected!
Say; No! by my Lord you will be resurrected;
and you will be informed of your deeds.
And that to Allah is very easy. (Q.64:7)

He (SWT) also says:

'And that verily Allah will resurrect all that is in the graves.' (Q.22:7)

and says: 'He (Man) said: who will resurrect the bone after it has been decayed!

Say: He Who has created it in the first instance will resurrect it. He has the knowledge of every creation. (Q.36:79)'

***Hashr* :** implies the driving together into gathering place after Resurrection from graves. This includes those that will be rewarded for their deeds like Man and Jin and those that will not be rewarded like animals and birds.

Some opinions say that it will be those who will be rewarded that will be resurrected. The aborted pregnancy, if it was after the presence of soul in it will be returned with the soul like inmate of the Paradise. If it was aborted before the presence of soul in it, it will be like other body, it will be resurrected and turned to sand.

The categories of people in the gathering place will be varied. The pious will ride while those with little good deed will walk on their foot and k*āfi*rs will be crawling.

The gathering; is authenticated by the Qur'ān, *Ḥadīth* and consensus of Muslim theologians. It is a truth; anybody who denies it is a k*āfi*r. Allah (SWT) says:

"The Day We will gather the pious before the Lord of Mercy in group.

We will drive the evil doers to the hell fire as their return." (Q.19:86)

And: "Gather together those who are wrong doers and their wives and what they were worshipping besides Allah; and guide them to the road to hell fire (*Jahīm*); and keep them standing; they will be asked". (Q.37:23-24)

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Write notes on order of resurrection and *Ḥashr***.**

3.3.3: Last Day and Its Horror

The Last Day is from the period of gathering to eternity or till when the inmate of Paradise will enter their abode and those whose abode will be hell will enter it. It is called the Last Day because it is connected with the last days of existence.

It is called the Day of *Qiyāmah* because of the Resurrection of the people from their graves and their standing before their Creator. The period is to provide proof either in favour or against.

The horror of *Qiyāmah*: The suckling mother shall forsake her infant; and (on that day) each man will forsake his brother and his mother and his father. For each one of them will on that day have much enough concern of his own. On that day there shall be beaming faces, smiling and joyful; and on that day there shall be faces covered with dust and veiled with darkness. (Q.80:34-32)

Bodies will produce sweats whose odour will be worst than the dead animal. This will be according to the deeds of Man, the questionings of the Angel of the people about their deeds and their short comings, and the witnessing of tongues, hands feet, hear, eyes and the skin; and the heavens and earth and the night and day and the pronouncement of the protector (Angels); and the receiving of the result; and the scale and *Ṣirāṭ*. The Glorious Qur'ān contains abundance of references to these.

On the length of standing there, nobody knows the actual period. Some say one thousand years. Others say fifty thousand years. "On a day whose length is one thousand years on your calculation": says Qur'ān 32:5. Allah (SWT) also says: "The Angels and Jibril will go to Him in a Day whose calculation will be equal to fifty thousand years".(Q.70:4)

There will be differences based on the differences in the deeds of the people.

It will be extended for the *Kāfir* and in between for the obstinate. It will lessen for the pious. Nothing of this will happen to the Prophets and Saints and the Righteous. This is based on the saying of Allah (SWT): "The great horror will not affect them; the Angels will welcome them; This is your Day that you have been promised."

It's Time. The knowledge of the time is with Allah. However, the Last Day has many minor signs, such as multitude of sins and evil.

Among its major signs are the coming out of anti-Christ and the descending of Prophet Isa; the coming out of Gog and Magog and the coming out of a Beast; and the rising of the sun from its West. The taking off of the Qur'ān from the hearts, and so on to all what the trustworthy people reported in the *Ḥadīth*.

All these about the Last Day and its horror and signs are truth confirmed by the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* and the consensus of the scholars. It is compulsory to have faith in them. Any one who denies them is a *kāfir*

Allah says:

> On that day when the spirit and the Angels stand up in their ranks;
> They shall not speak except him who shall receive the sanction
> of the Merciful and declare what is right. (Q. 78:38)

He (SWT) says: And every soul comes with its driver and witness. (Q.50:21)

The day when some faces will be brightened and others will be darkened.

The sun will be closed to the creatures on the Day of Resurrection up to a mile. The people will be soaked in their sweats according to their deeds. Among them are those who will be soaked to their ankles, some to their knees and some to their mouth, some among them will drown completely. So says a Tradition related to the Prophet Muhammad.

Allah says:

Men, fear your Lord and fear the day when no parent shall avail his child;
nor any child his parents. Allah's promise is surely true. Let the life of this
world not deceive you ; nor let the deceiver trick you concerning Allah.

The Last Day and the Horror of the gathering is true. May the Merciful God make it easy for us. Among the means of relief from it is the obedience of Allah; fulfillment of responsibility; assisting those in hardship, feeding the hungry people and accommodating the travelers.

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Give a vivid portray of the Last Day and its horror.

3.3.4 *Al-Ḥisāb* (Accountability)

Literarily *al-Ḥisāb* is to make account. Technically it is the summoning by Allah His creature on the Day of Resurrection to render account of his deeds, good or bad, words or actions after receiving the records.

He will question them on their deeds by talking to them naturally without letter or sound, in a manner which will allow them to hear it or with sound and letters as He may wish. The accountability can be by the Angels only; and it can be by Allah and the Angels at the same time.

The infallible Men (Prophets, Saints and Holy Men) will not render any account. So also are a 70.000 people that will enter paradise without rendering any account as contained in a Prophetic *Ḥadīth*.

Allah will give the accounts of all at once. The accounts of one will not disturb Him from the other. It will be easy for one and hard for another. For some it will be open or public while for others it will be through the mercy of Allah or through His justice; these will depend on the nature of deeds. The easiest account is the one between Allah and His worshipper secretly that no other person knows (any thing about him).

The wisdom behind this belief in accountability is to show the degree of honour of the pious and the extent of decrease of the (wrong doers) and to encourage people to do good. It also aims at serving as strong warning against evils.

There are references to this creed in the Qur'ān, *Ḥadīth* and the consensus of scholars. Allah (SWT) says: "As for him who will be given his book in his right hand, he shall receive easy reckoning; and he that is given his book to his back, he will invoke for his destruction. (Q.84:7-11) He

(SWT) says: Those are the recipients of the share of what they have done. Swift is the reckoning of Allah. Q.3:199)

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Discuss the Islamic eschatological tenet of *al-Ḥisāb***.**

3.3.6: Sins, Repentance and Consequence of Dieing Without Repentance

According to the best of the opinions, Sins are divided into two, minor and major. This is the opinion of *Ahlus-Sunnah* (Orthodox Majority) and Mu'tazilites (Rationalist Minority). The major sins are not exhaustible. Among the signs to know them are:

(a) Attraction of capital punishment
(b) Incurring of fixed punishment.
(c) Cursing of perpetrator of such sin.
(d) Describing it as wrong doing.

The most grievous sin is associating of partner with Allah, murder, magic, eating of wealth of the orphan, devouring of usury, running away from battle front, slandering of a faithful woman. Others among the major sins are lying about the Prophet (SAW), committing of adultery, disobeying of one's parents and false witness. Others are arrogance or haughtiness in the disobedience of Allah; it is a destructive quality even if the person is religious. All other sins outside these are minor sins without limiting its number. Minor sin turns major on the following basis:

1. Persistence on it (2) Underrating of it, deriving joy in commiting it and being proud of it. (3) Encouraging people to emulate it.

Seeking Forgiveness from Allah can only be by repentance "Allah will not forgive any association with Him. He can forgive any sin besides that for whom He likes.

The minor sins are atoned for by moving away from major sins. Allah says: if you avoid the grave sins you are forbidden We shall pardon your evil deeds and admit you to an honourable place (paradise). Every act of worship attracts atonement for sins.

Repentance: Literarily, it means to turn or to come back. Technically, it means the following conditions: (1) To avoid sins (2) To show remorse (3) Having intention not to commit such sin again in life. (4) To return property to its owner or to seek forgiveness from him. If this is not possible, he should increase good deeds for the pleasure of Allah possibly Allah may have mercy on him in the Day of Resurrection. (5) It must be done before death. (6) It is compulsory for the sinner to repent as early as possible without delaying it. Delay of repentance is also a sin in itself.

Pointer to this is Allah's word: "Repent for your sin before Allah generally O you believers. And "O you believers turn to Allah in true repentance".(Q.66:8). "Tell the disbelievers if you avoid sins you are to be forgiven all what you have done in the past." (Q.8:28)
For the minor sins there is acceptance of *tawbah*-repentance for Allah says.

He is the one accepting the repentance from His servants. (Q.9:104)
If the sinner repeats the sin will his *tawbah* be accepted? The Sunnīs assert that this has not violated his repentance, but needs to renew his *tawbah* for committing another sins. But from the point of view of Mu'tazilites (Rationalists) they maintain that his *tawbah* has been violated, because among the conditions of *tawbah* is determination not to return to sin again.

Dieing without repentance from grave sins: The Sunnīs say, that the affairs of anyone who committed grave sins without repentance before his death, his affair depends on the decision of Allah-his Lord. If Allah wishes He forgives him and admits him into Paradise. If He wishes He punishes him without admitting him everlasting in the hell. Allah says: "Allah will not forgive those who associate other gods with Him, but He will forgive who He wills for other sins";(Q. 4: 48; 116) "and whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it also". (Q.99:7-8)

The rationalist Mu'tazilites say such person who committed grave sin without repentance till he died will be perpetual in Hell. On the other hand, the Sunnīs are of the opinion that anyone who died with no repentance from his sins the decision of his affairs depends on Allah (his Lord).

It is not compulsory to punish believers for committing some sins among the major sins because punishment for such leads to *Kufr* as can be seen from the view of the *Ash'arite* group, which is contrary to the Maturidite group, who say that it is compulsory to punish some believers who commit sin.

It is not compulsory to punish some believers who committed major sins though avoidance of it is very important. But in the case of reward in the Day of Resurrection the evil will be rewarded in the same measure.
Allah says: "One who comes with evil to him will not be rewarded unless with equal measure. But the good deed is accepted for the servant in manifold. Or in another case the reward will be multiplied by Allah till He is pleased. Allah says: He that does good deeds shall be repaid in tenfold. (Q.6:160); He says: "He Allah multiplies for whom He likes" (Q.2:261).

CONCLUSION

Belief in Resurrection is an essential article of faith in Islam. Its purpose is to obtain reward for obeying commandment of God or punishment for the disobedience of Him. While the rationalists maintain that the

Resurrection will be in spirit only, the majority opinion in Islam teaches that it will be in spirit and body.

There will be *Ḥashr* on resurrection**,** which implies the driving together of men, jinn, animals and birds into gathering place after Resurrection from graves.

Ba'th and *Qiyāmah* are two technical terms interchangeably used in the Islamic eschatology implying Resurrection and Raising up. *Qiyāmah* will be horrible for the unbelievers while nothing of the horror will happen to the Prophets and Saints and the Righteous.

It is also a requirement to believe in the *ashrātus-Sā'ah* i.e. indications that the Hour is imminent and that there will be accountability (*Ḥisāb*).

Sins are divided into major and minor. They are both pardonable by repentance. The rationalist Mu'tazilites say such person who committed grave sin without repentance till he died will be perpetual in Hell. On the other hand, the Sunnis are of the opinion that anyone who died with no repentance from his sins the decision of his affairs depends on Allah (his Lord).

3.4: SUMMARY

At the onset, this unit explains the meaning of Resurrection, gives the opinion of three schools of thought on its nature and states its purpose. It then gives a hint of the order it would follow and presents the *Ḥashr* event in detail. It enumerates *ashratus-Sā'ah* and gives a vivid picture of the horror *Qiyāmah* would be for the unbelievers. It mentions accountability and describes it. It concludes with a discussion of sin, repentance and consequences of the unrepentant sinner.

3.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Books of Hadith with English Translation.
(3) D. B. MacDonald (1903). Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and
Constitutional Theory, London, English trans. of Muhammad al-Fudali's Creed, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalām*, 1903, pp. 315-351
(4) Hasan Sayyid Mutawallī (1402/1983). *Mudhakkiratu `t-Tawhīd*; vols 1-5, Cairo,
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(5) Abdalati, H. (1975) *Islam In Focus,* Indiana, American Trust Publications

3.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Unit 4 Eschatological Issues III: Record of Deeds, *Wazn, Ṣirāṭ, Ḥawḍ, Shafā'a* and Recompense

CONTENTS

4.1: Introduction
4.2: Learning Outcomes
4.3: Background to Eschatological Issues III: Record of Deeds, *Wazn, Ṣirāṭ, Ḥawḍ, Shafā'a* and Recompense
4.3.1: Record of Deeds
4.3.2: Weight and Measurement
4.3.3: A*ṣ*- *Ṣirāṭ* (Crossing the Bridge)
4.3.4: *Al-Ḥawḍ* (The Tank or The Basin)
4.3.5: *Ash-Shafā'ah* (Intercession)
4.3.6: *Al-Jannat wan-Nār* (Paradise and Hell)
4.4: Summary
4.5: References/Further Readings
4.6: Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

4.1: INTRODUCTION

You would have one time or the other read or listen to Muslim scholars discussing events that will take place after death. Some of such issues are those presented to you in the first, second and third units of this module. In this fourth Unit we are going to present the remaining issues providing their bases from Islamic sacred sources where available.

4.2 Leaning Outcomes

Having digested this unit, you would be able to discuss

(i) Islamic concept of what will happen to Record of Deeds in the Here-after.

(ii) nature and significance of Weight and Measurement

(iii) the concept of A*ṣ*- *Ṣirāṭ* (the Bridge), *al-Ḥawḍ* (the Tank) and *ash-Shafā'ah* (Intercession)

(iv) *Al-Jannat wan-Nār* (Paradise and Hell)

4.3 Background to Eschatological Issues III: Record of Deeds, *Wazn, Ṣirāṭ, Ḥawḍ, Shafā'a* and Recompense

4.3.1. Record of Deeds

This record refers to the book in which the Angels have written the deeds of a servant, speeches, intentions and actions of various parts of his body in this world. Every believer will receive this record in *al-Qiyāmah* (the Day of Resurrection) as explained in the sacred sources of the Muslim creed, the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. According to a Prophetic Tradition:

> Every servant of God has a daily record of his deeds.
> When a believer's record is folded, devoid of *Istighfār*
> (seeking forgiveness), it will be folded dark black.
> When it contains *Istighfār* it will be folded in pure light.

Furthermore, it is clear from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* that all people in general will receive their record of deeds physically except the Prophets, the Angels and those who will enter Paradise without reckoning.

It is reported that each person will be called upon to receive the record which will be flown from Allah's treasure and stick to his neck. Then the Angels will collect them from their necks and give them in their hands. Those who obey the commandment of Allah will have their records with their right hands. The disbelievers will have theirs with their left hands. The wrong doers will collect theirs through different modes.

> He who is given his book in his right hand will say,
> "Ah here! Read my book" (Q.69:19).

> He who is given his book in his left hand will say:
> "Would that my book was not given me! Would That
> I know nothing of my account!" (Q.69:25-26).

> but he that is given his book in his right hand shall
> have a lenient reckoning and go back to his people
> rejoicing. But he that is given his book from behind
> his back shall call down destruction on himself and
> burn in the fire of Hell" (Q.84:7-13).

> The works of each man We have bound on his neck on
> the Day of Resurrection, We shall confront him with a
> book spread wide open (saying); "Read your book."
> (Q.17:13)

The reading of the books of records is also confirmed. Every one will read his book even if he is unlettered. When the *Mū'min* reads his Record his face

will be bright out of joy. When the *Kāfir* reads his Record his face will be blackened out of sadness.

Since this record of deed is confirmed by the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and consensus opinions of scholars; it is compulsory to believe it and any one who denies it, is a *kāfir*. Even though, the whole affairs and its workability are with Allah.

Self Assessment Exercise 1 (SAEs)

1.Discuss the concept of Record of Deeds from the point of view of Muslim eschatology.

4.3.2 Weight and Measurement

That concrete weight (*al-Wazn*) will be used to measure the deeds of mankind on the Day of Resurrection is real contrary to the views of Mu 'tazilites (Rationalists), which say it only means Justice of Allah. It is compulsory to have faith in it because it is confirmed by the Holy Qur'ān, the *Ḥadīth* and the consensus of the opinion of the scholars.

> And weight on that Day is real. And the weight of Justice will be placed forth on the Day of Resurrection (Q.41:28).
>
> Those whose (good) deeds is weighty on that Day will be successful; and those whose (good) deeds is not weighty will be the losers (Q.7:8-9).

For the Prophets, the Angels and those who will enter Paradise without Reckoning there will be no weight for them.

The deeds of the *kāfirs* will be weighed; and they will receive punishment. On the other hand, Allah says: "On the Day of Resurrection, We shall not give any weight to them" (Q.18:105). This is referring purposely to measuring the deeds of *kāfirs*, such as goodness to the family or kinship which will be weighed to compensate for their evil deeds.

Belief in the measurement is put in place so that every servant of Allah will be mindful of what is for him and what is against him in goodness and evil.

Do you know how the scale or measurement under the discussion look like? Look at this picture (fig.):

This picture, though not really represent the scale or measurement used to measure our deeds on the day of judgment but it portrails its description as contained in one of the prophetic traditions which mentions that scrolls of bad deeds placed in one pan will be lighter than a single card placed in the other pan which will be heavier. (Recorded by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad. It is also authenticated by Al-Albānī in his Ṣaḥīḥ Alt-Tirmidhī (No. 2127).

On resurrection, the Measurement will also make the servant see his deeds clearly form himself. It is also a sort of examination for the servant to see whether he will have faith in it even without seeing it in the present world. The similarity of the worldly events is enough for us to believe in it. Any one who denies it is a *kāfir*.

Self Assessment Exercise 2 (SAEs)

2. Discuss the significance of Measurement of Man's Record (*Wazn*) that will take place on Resurrection.

4.3.3: A*ş- Şirāṭ* (Crossing the Bridge)

The literal meaning of a*ş- Şirāṭ* is path. In the Islamic eschatology it is a bridge placed on Hell. Every body first and last will pass over it. As for the unbelievers (*Kufār*) they will not be able to cross and there will be nothing for them other than to fall into its pit. Based on a report, those that will pass over it will include the Prophets, the Truthful and those who will enter paradise with no rendering of any account; all of them will experience no hardship.

The *Şirāṭ* has been described as thinner than a single hair and sharper than sword. Angels are standing by its two sides. It is like a magnet and barbed-wire more dreaded than those in this world from the beginning to the end. It is flexible; could be narrow and wide depending on the person's deeds.

While the *Sunnī*s (Orthodox Muslim) confirm it, the Mu'tazilites maintain that it is only figurative. Some interpreted it to mean the *Barzakh* stage (the period between death and Resurrection). Obviously the existence of it as it

was described will not make it possible for anyone to crossover it easily. It may be the path or a road leading to Paradise or Hell. The *Sunni* Muslims say its existence as described is not unacceptable to the intellect. It is compulsory to have faith in it and work in preparation for crossing over it. Allah says: "Move forward over the *Ṣirāṭ*." The Prophet said: "The *Ṣirāṭ* Bridge will be placed over the Hell fire; I and my *Ummah* will be the first to cross it."

It is compulsory to believe in the existence of *Ṣirāṭ* as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān leaving the best knowledge about it to Almighty Allah. The barbed-wire by the two sides of the *Ṣirāṭ* is long enough to hook any one crossing over it.

It is reported that among those who will pass safely on it are the righteous *Mū'min*s; those that are going to be destroyed on it by falling into the abyss of fire and remaining there fore-ever are the disbelievers and hypocrites; and those who will be living there for a while before and then being rescued are the sinners among the *Mū'mins*. And those that will be salvaged from the hell are those whose books of righteous deed are weighty. Some will pass over it in the twinkling of an eye; some like lightening; some like wind, and others like a flying bird and others like grasshoppers. Others are those who will walk and those who will crawl. Pointer to this is the injunction of Allah:

> Everyone of you will pass over it, this is a concluded issue with your Lord. Then We will save those who are pious and leave the disobedient in it on their knees (Q.19:71-72).

Self Assessment Exercise 3 (SAEs)

3. Give details of the belief that crossing over a*ṣ-Ṣirāṭ* is verity in the Muslim eschatology.

4.3.4 *Al-Ḥawḍ* (The Tank or The Basin).

It is reported in *Aḥādīth* of Bukhārī and Muslim that the Prophet said: " My tank is a month's journey and its surrounding is also a month's journey. The colour of it is whiter than milk. Its odour is more fragrant than aromatic-musk. Its cups are more than number of stars in the sky. Any one who drinks from it will not feel thirsty forever."

There are different reports on the wideness of the Tank, its quantity and number as there are different reports regarding its time of existence. The majority's opinion is that it will be found before passing the *Ṣirāṭ* for people to drink from it after coming out from the grave. Others say that it will be after passing the *Ṣirāṭ*, because its water is from *al-Kawthar* for the people to drink from it when they will be stopped after *Ṣirāṭ* to revenge among themselves. The *Tafsīr* of Qurtubī states that the Tanks are two. The point however is that every Prophet will have a tank for his Community from which those who fulfil their religious obligations and are righteous will drink.

Those who will be sent away and denied drinking from it are the *Kāfir*s, the disobedient and those who do not believe in its existence.

The Mu'tazilites reject the view about the description of the Tank. They say it only implied something of the pleasure of Allah which He gives to whom ever He wishes among his servants. This is contrary to the text of the *Ḥadīth*. The truth is that the Tank or the Spring is real. To believe there is Tank of Spring for the best of the Prophets is compulsory as it is reported in the sacred texts.

Self Assessment Exercise 4 (SAEs)

4. Summarize the belief in the existence of *Ḥawḍ* for the Prophet in the hereafter.

4.3.5 *Ash-Shafā'ah* (Intercession)

Ash-Shafā'ah literally means intercession or request for goodness from somebody for somebody. The intercession of the Almighty Allah connotes pardon. Verily He will pardon anyone that says *Lā ilāha illāllāh* (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah) and believe in the message of the Prophet that was sent to him even if he did not do any righteous deeds. Allah will shower His mercy on him by not putting him in the Hell fire without intercession of anybody. He Allah (SWT) says: 'He punishes whoever He wishes and forgives whoever He wishes' (Q. 2:284).

The Prophet (Ṣ) is the Intercessor to be accepted before any others among the Prophets, Messengers, Angels who are close to Allah as has been reported from the Bukhārī and Muslim in their collections of *Ḥadīth*: 'I am the first intercessor whose intercession will be firstly accepted'.

There are five kinds of intercession:

1. The intercession during the judgement to relieve the entire creatures, believers

and the disbelievers, for the length of standing on *qiyāmah* and its horror. This is specially for the Prophet (Ş). It is called major intercession. It is the first praise worthy position; the remaining ones will be in respect of those who will be inmates of Paradise and the inmates of the Hell. Allah (SWT) says: 'Verily your Lord will soon put you in the praise – worthy position'. (Q.17:79).

It was reported that when the situation will be unbearable in the standing place and the people will be longing to be dispatched, even if to the hell fire. They will be inspired that the Prophets are intermediaries between men and the Creator. They will then go at this time to the Prophets from Adam to Isa. They will request them to intercede from the horrible situation. Every one of the Prophets will give excuse until when they will come to Prophet Muhammad (Ş) and request for his intercession. He will say I am for it. He will then intercede and his intercession will be accepted. Then the door will be opened for other intercessions.

2. Intercession for a group of people who will enter Paradise when they are rendering account of their deeds. This is especially for the Prophet (Ş) too.

3. Intercession for the elevated level. No disagreement among the Scholars of Islamic Theology on those three types of Intercession.

4. The intercession for those who commit major sins that deserved to enter Hell before entering into it.

5. The intercession for the removal of those who commit major sins from hell fire.

These last two are rejected by the Mu'tazilites and the Kharijites who believe that any body who commits major sins will live in hell fire perpetually. The *Ash'ariyyah*, the *Māturīdiyyah* and some among the Rafidites confirmed this.

Opponents of the intercession buttress their stands with the saying of Allah The intercession of the intercessors would not benefit them (Q.74:48); and 'the Day when no soul will be able to do anything for another soul. Allah will then reign supreme.' and 'Fear the day when no soul will benefit another soul; and Intercession will not be accepted from him. (Q.2:48); And 'We don't have any intercessor and not a closed friend' (Q.26:100-101) And

'Nor any ransom will be taken for it and Intercession will not benefit it'. (Q.2:48,123)

The reply to these is that the general meaning of these verses refers to the specific intercessions, for increase in rewards. This will be specifically for the believers based on the *Ḥadīth* 'My Intercession will be for those who commit major sins among my community'.

Meanwhile there are references in the Holy Qur'ān confirming Intercession. Allah says: "On that day intercession will not benefit except from One who Allah has given permission and pleased with his word" (20:109). He (SWT) also says: "There is no any Intercessor except after this permission." (Q.2:255).

When the Qur'ān contains many verses on a particular topic, part of it negating it and part of it confirming it is not possible that what Qur'ān negates and what it affirms are the same, so that there will be no contradiction. This is not possible. It will therefore be clear that negated Intercession is not the affirmed one. The negated intercession is the intercession of the unbelievers while the affirmed intercession is the intercession of the sinners among the *Ummah*. The Prophet said: "My Intercession will be for those who committed major sins among my *Ummah*".

Allah (SWT) says: "Seek forgiveness for your sin and for the believers, males and females" (Q.47:19). The one who commits major sin is a believer. The seeking of Prophetic forgiveness for him will be accepted based on the word of Allah: 'And later your Lord will give you what will please you' (Q.93:5). And as for the *Ḥadīth* which says: 'Those who committed major sins among my community will not have access to my Intercession' it has been agreed upon that it was fabricated; and that if it is authentic, it is in respect of those who renounced Islam among them.

Self Assessment Exercise 5 (SAEs)

5. Clarify the Muslim eschatological concept of *shafā'ah* (Intercession).

4.3.6 *Al-Jannat wan-Nār* (Paradise and Hell)

Al-Jannah literally means garden. As a theological term, it connotes the abode of rewards, which Allah preserved for the believers. Ibn Abbas and his group say that it is seven abodes of paradise. The highest of it and best is ***Firdaws***, followed by ***Na'īm***, ***Ma'wā***, ***Khuld***, ***'Adn***, ***Dār us-salām*** and the

last one is ***Dārul-Ijlāl***. Majority agree that it is four. ***Naʿīm*** and ***Ma'wā*** are for him who fears his Lord. They are below ***'Adn*** and ***Firdaws***.
Others say there is only one Paradise. The names are just testifying to it to confirm its meaning and place above the seven heavens and under the ***ʿArsh***. The important thing however is to have faith that there is an abode which Allah preserves for the pious called Paradise. Therein are what eyes have not seen and what ears have not heard of and its thinking has not occurred in the heart. Therein are what will interest the souls, and what the eyes will enjoy. Whether it is only one or many the knowledge of it is with Allah but we must believe in it accordingly.

***An - Nār* (Hell):** *An-Nār* literally means a smooth body which burns. In the Muslim Eschatology, it means Hell, the Abode of Punishment preserved for the sinners which is called *Jahannam*. It has seven gates every one of which has its own portion. There is a gate in it for Muslim culprit, gate for the Jews, gate for the Christians, gate for the Sabians, gate for the Zoroastrians, one for the idol worshipers and one for the hypocrites. Hell is of seven grades or more or less. The knowledge of its nature and its place is left to Almighty Allah and we must believe in it accordingly also.

Existence of Paradise and Hell: The opinion of generality of Muslims is that Paradise and Hell exist and have been created (by Allah) with references to the story of Adam and Hawa. They were made to live in the Paradise and expelled from it, because they ate the fruit from the forbidden tree. The description of the Paradise where Adam lived is the description of Paradise of ***Daru'l-Akhirah***. Allah says:

> Here you shall not be hungry nor be naked;
> You shall not thirst nor feel the scorching
> heat.
>
> (Reaching there upon) They shall feel neither
> the scorching heat nor the biting cold.

As this has confirmed the existence of paradise then it points to the existence of hell too. Allah says about Paradise: "it is preserved for the pious." He says about hell that:' It is preserved for the disbelievers'.

The Mu'tazilites and Kharijites denied their existence. They said that both of them will exist in the Day of Reward (for the following reasons).

1. Because Allah says: it is larger than the heavens and earth. If it already exists is it in the heavens or on the earth?

2. Their existence is for reward and punishment. Reward and punishment have not started now; therefore, their existence now is frivolous.
3. Allah says: "Its food is forever" if it is already existing actually, it will be annihilated because Allah says: "Every thing will perish except His mighty face. Since it is not possible for its food to be perished, then it will not exist unless on the Day of resurrection.

Response to the above assertions is that Allah has made us to know that His *Kursiy* is wider than all the seven heavens and earth whereas they are in existence. Again, the rational behind the existence is known to Almighty Allah. Not all the existing things are rationally understood. Since injunctions from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* have pointed to their existence, it is a matter of compulsion to have faith in them.

Everlastingness of Paradise and Hell: There is consensus of opinion on the everlastingness of the two (Paradise and Hell) and all what are therein. Some theologians however have contrary view saying that both of them will perish. The evidence put forward by them is Allah's word about the dwellers of Hell.

> They shall abide as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless your Lord ordained other wise. Your Lord accomplishes what He wills.

And His sayings about dwellers of Paradise:

> As for the blessed, they shall dwell in Paradise as long as the heavens and the earth endures, unless your Lord ordains otherwise; and (theirs) shall be an unfailing gift.

Self Assessment Exercise 6 (SAEs)

6. Clarify the belief that the existence of *al-Jannah* and *an-Nār* is verity. Give the variant views where they exist.

4.4 SUMMARY

This unit opened with an account of the concept of Record of Deeds in the Muslim eschatology. Since the concept of Record of Deed is confirmed by the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and consensus opinions of scholars; it is compulsory to believe in it and any one who denies it is a *kāfir*. Because the Holy Qur'ān, and *Ḥadīth* mention it, the majority opinion except the Mu'tazilites, also maintains that concrete weight will be used to measure Deeds of Man on Resurrection. So also is crossing over a*ṣ-Ṣirāṭ*, as

mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān leaving the best knowledge about it to Almighty Allah, existence of Tank of Spring for the Prophet for which only his faithful adherents will have access and *shafā 'ah* (the intercession that Allah will grant His chosen ones on the Last Day. It should also be believed that rewards of the righteous shall be in Paradise; and the punishments of the unbelievers shall be in the hell- fire.

4.5: REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

(1) The Holy *Qur'ān* with English Translation.
(2) Books of Hadith with English Translation.
(3) D. B. MacDonald (1903). Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and
Constitutional Theory, London, English trans. of Muhammad al-Fudali's Creed, *Kifāyat al-'Awām fi Ilmi `l-Kalām*, 1903, pp. 315-351
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(6) Hughes, T. P. (1895). *Dictionary of Islam*, London, Allen & Co.

4.6 Possible Answers to Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs)

Answers to SAEs 1

1. Record of deeds refers to the book in which the Angels have written the deeds of a servant, speeches, intentions and actions of various parts of his body in this world. Every believer and people in general, except the Prophets, Angels and those who will enter Paradise without reckoning, will receive this record in *al-Qiyāmah* (the Day of Resurrection) as explained in the sacred sources of the Muslim creed, the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. Since this record of deed is confirmed by the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and consensus opinions of scholars; it is compulsory to believe it and any one who denies it, is a *kāfir*. Even though, the whole affairs and its workability are with Allah.

Answers to SAEs 2

2. Concrete weight (*al-Wazn*) will be used to measure the deeds of mankind on the Day of Resurrection is real contrary to the views of Mu 'tazilites (Rationalists), which say it only means Justice of Allah. It is compulsory to have faith in it because it is confirmed by the Holy Qur'ān, the *Ḥadīth* and the consensus of the opinion of the scholars.

Belief in the measurement is put in place so that every servant of Allah will be mindful of what is for him and what is against him in goodness and evil. On resurrection, the Measurement will also make the servant see his deeds clearly form himself. It is also a sort of examination for the servant to see

whether he will have faith in it even without seeing it in the present world. The similarity of the worldly events is enough for us to believe in it. Any one who denies it is a *kāfir*.

Answers to SAEs 3

3. In the Islamic eschatology a*ş- Şirāţ* (path) is a bridge placed on Hell. Every body first and last will pass over it. The unbelievers (*Kuf̣ār*) will not be able to cross it and there will be nothing for them other than to fall into its pit. Based on a report, those that will pass over it will include the Prophets, the Truthful and those who will enter paradise with no rendering of any account; all of them will experience no hardship. It has been described as thinner than a single hair and sharper than sword. Angels are standing by its two sides. It is like a magnet and barbed-wire more dreaded than those in this world from the beginning to the end. It is flexible; could be narrow and wide depending on the person's deeds. It is compulsory to have faith in it and work in preparation for crossing over it as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān leaving the best knowledge about it to Almighty Allah. Allah says: "Move forward over the *Şirāṭ*." The Prophet said: "The *Şirāṭ* Bridge will be placed over the Hell fire; I and my *Ummah* will be the first to cross it."

Answers to SAEs 4

4. It is reported in *Aḥādīth* of Bukhārī and Muslim that the Prophet said: " My tank is a month's journey and its surrounding is also a month's journey. The colour of it is whiter than milk. Its odour is more fragrant than aromatic-musk. Its cups are more than number of stars in the sky. Any one who drinks from it will not feel thirsty forever."

There are different reports as regard the Tank, its quantity, number its time of existence and when it will be found before or after passing the *Şirāṭ* for people to drink. The *Tafsīr* of Qurtubī states that the Tanks are two. The point however is that every Prophet will have a tank for his Community from which those who fulfil their religious obligations and are righteous will drink. The *Kāfir*s, the disobedient and those who do not believe in its existence will be sent away and prevented from drink.

The Mu'tazilites reject the view about the description of the Tank and view it as impling to something of the pleasure of Allah which He gives to whom ever He wishes among His servants. This is contrary to the text of the *Ḥadīth*. The truth is that the Tank or the Spring is real. To believe there is Tank of Spring for the best of the Prophets is compulsory as it is reported in the sacred texts. **Answers to SAEs 4**

Answers to SAEs 5

5. *Ash-Shafā'ah* literally means intercession or request for goodness from somebody for somebody. The intercession of the Almighty Allah connotes pardon. He Allah (SWT) says: 'He punishes whoever He wishes and forgives whoever He wishes' (Q. 2:284).

The Prophet (Ş) will be the first Intercessor before any others among the Prophets, Messengers, Angels who are close to Allah as has been reported from the Bukhārī and Muslim in their collections of *Ḥadīth*: 'I am the first intercessor whose intercession will be firstly accepted'. However, there are five kinds of intercession:

a. The intercession during the judgement to relieve the entire creatures, believers and the disbelievers, for the length of standing on *qiyāmah* and its horror. This is specially for the Prophet (Ş). It is called major intercession. It is the first praise worthy position; the remaining ones will be in respect of those who will be inmates of Paradise and the inmates of the Hell. Allah (SWT) says: 'Verily your Lord will soon put you in the praise – worthy position'. (Q.17:79). There is a prophetic hadith in respect of this first intercession.

b. Intercession for a group of people who will enter Paradise when they are rendering account of their deeds. This is especially for the Prophet (Ş) too.

c. Intercession for the elevated level. No disagreement among the Scholars of
Islamic Theology on those three types of Intercession.

d. The intercession for those who commit major sins that deserved to enter Hell before entering into it.

e. The intercession for the removal of those who commit major sins from hell fire. These last two are rejected by the Mu'tazilites and the Kharijites who believe that any body who commits major sins will live in hell fire perpetually. The *Ash'ariyyah*, the *Māturīdiyyah* and some among the Rafidites confirmed this.

Opponents of the intercession buttress their stands with the Q.74:48; (Q.2:48); (Q.26:100-101) and (Q.2:48,123). The prophetic tradition earlier mentioned wherein the Prophet (SAW) confirmed the intercession and references from the Qur'an are enough for the confirmation of various intercessions on the Day of Judgment. See Qur'an (20:109), (Q.2:255), (Q.47:19), (Q.93:5).

Answers to SAEs 6

6. *Al-Jannah* literally means garden. As a theological term, it connotes the abode of rewards, which Allah preserved for the believers. There are difference opinions as regard the number; some say it is seven abodes of paradise, majority agree that it is four while others say it is one Paradise. The highest of it and best is ***Firdaws***, others are ***Naʿīm***, ***Ma'wā***, ***Khuld***, ***'Adn***, ***Dār us-salām*** and the last one is ***Dārul-Ijlāl***.

The important thing however is to have faith that there is an abode which Allah preserves for the pious called Paradise. Whether it is only one or many the knowledge of it is with Allah but we must believe in it accordingly.

***An - Nār* (Hell):** *An-Nār* literally means a smooth body which burns. In the Muslim Eschatology, it means Hell, the Abode of Punishment preserved for the sinners which is called *Jahannam*. It has seven gates every one of which has its own portion. It is of seven grades or more or less. The knowledge of its nature and its place is left to Almighty Allah and we must believe in it accordingly also.

There are some Qur'anic evidences confirming the existence of Paradise and Hell The opinion of generality of Muslims is that Paradise and Hell exist and have been created (by Allah) with references to the story of Adam and Hawa and other verses of the Holy Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet (SAW).

However, both the Muʻtazilites and Kharijites denied the existence of Paradise and Hell fire. They said that both of them will exist in the Day of Reward, for the some reasons which have been refuted by the Muslim theologioans.

There is consensus of opinion on the everlastingness of the two (Paradise and Hell) and all what are therein. Some theologians however have contrary view saying that both of them will perish. The evidence put forward by them is the following words of Allah about the dwellers of Hell.

> They shall abide as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless your Lord ordained other wise. Your Lord accomplishes what He wills.

And His sayings about dwellers of Paradise:

> As for the blessed, they shall dwell in Paradise as long as the heavens and the earth endures, unless

your Lord ordains otherwise; and (theirs) shall be an unfailing gift.